



MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL WINNERS ANNOUNCED AND CARERS RECOGNISED ACROSS THE COUNTRY

SYDNEY: *Life Without Barriers and Carers Australia have today announced the winners of the National Carer Awards.*

The winners selected by the judges were from three states:

(VIC) Melbourne Mum Mulu Mihreteab – Winner Family Carer Award

(NSW) Tamworth foster carer Allan Skippen – Winner Foster & Kinship Carer Award

(WA) Banksia Grove student Ellie Moir – Winner Young Carer Award (25 years & under).

Winners and finalists were congratulated and recognised in front of family, friends, and representatives from across the social services sector.

The awards were presented at a luncheon in Sydney by The Honourable Christian Porter, MP, Minister for Social Services.

Master of Ceremonies at the awards Tim Ferguson said the carer stories were compelling. "Their dedication and resilience in the face of life's challenges should be recognised and applauded often," Tim said.

According to a 2015 Deloitte Access Economics report, more than 1 in 8 Australians are estimated to be providing informal care to family and friends with a disability, chronic illness, mental illness or who are frail aged. The value of that care to the economy is estimated to be \$60.3 million annually.

There are a further 9,000 foster carers nationally, and thousands more who care for a child who is known or related to them but not their own, known as kinship carers.

Chief Executive of Life Without Barriers Claire Robbs said foster carers and unpaid carers so often go unrecognised but have a significant impact on the lives of the people they support.

"The National Carer Awards have been developed to raise awareness and understanding of carers in regional, remote and metropolitan communities across the country where they make such a tremendous contribution to the lives of the people they support," she said.

All carers have a story to tell and recognising them for the extraordinary unpaid support they provide highlights their crucial role. The strong response to the national awards program demonstrates the large numbers of unpaid carers and foster/kinship carers across the country.

“Unpaid carers are an integral part of Australia's health system and are the foundation of our aged, disability, palliative and community care systems,” said Carers Australia CEO Ara Cresswell.

“Anyone, any time, can become a carer. At some time in life there is a great chance that you will personally either *be* a carer, *need* a carer or *know* a carer.,” said Carers Australia CEO Ara Cresswell.

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About the carer awards

The national awards recognise and celebrate unpaid carers and foster and kinship carers for the extraordinary contribution they make to the community.

Finalists for the State and Territory awards were selected from an impressive and diverse range of nominations. State & Territory category winners were the participants in the National Final.

Carers were awarded across three categories (one winner per category): Family Carer, Foster and Kinship Carer, Young Carer aged 25 years and under. Carers eligible for these awards are unpaid but may be receiving carer-related government payment or a reimbursement.

The National Carer Awards is a partnership between Carers Australia and Life Without Barriers and runs in every state and territory.

The National Awards are funded by the Department of Social Services and supported by Automotive Holdings Group (AHG) and Telstra.

www.carersawards.com.au #CarerAwards2015

For an interview or to organise photos please contact:

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<http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/storage/access-economics-report-2015.pdf>

About Life Without Barriers:

Life Without Barriers has grown from humble beginnings into one of the most significant not-for-profit organisations in Australia, delivering services in over 250 communities across Australia and New Zealand. Our community-based programs assist children and young people, people with a disability, older Australians, and vulnerable and marginalised communities.

About Carers Australia:

Carers Australia is the national peak body representing Australia's unpaid carers. With a vision of *an Australia that values and supports carers*, Carers Australia advocates on behalf of unpaid carers to influence policies and services at a national level. We work collaboratively with partners and our member organisations, the network of state and territory Carers Associations, to deliver a range of essential national carer services. We continuously work to improve the health, wellbeing, resilience and financial security of carers and to best ensure that caring is a shared responsibility of family, community and Government.