



Inclusion of Family Carers in Aged and Community Care

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Carers Australia

We believe all carers, regardless of their cultural and linguistic differences, age, disability, religion, socioeconomic status, gender identification and geographical location should have the same rights, choices and opportunities as other Australians.

The members of Carers Australia are the state and territory Carers Associations.



Family carers

A carer is an individual who provides personal care, support and assistance to another individual who needs it because that other individual:

- has a disability; or
- has a medical condition (including a chronic or terminal illness); or
- has a mental illness; or
- is frail aged.

-Carer Recognition Bill 2010

There are 2.6 million family carers in Australia



The diversity of carers

Carers are young, of working age, older, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, they live in major cities and regional rural and remote areas and may have been born outside Australia.

These carers support our aged and community care systems.



Contribution of family carers

- Providers of the majority of care in the community
- 79 per cent of assistance required due to disability or illness provided by family carers



“We also rely heavily on unpaid family carers (the ‘invisible’ health workforce) who may dwindle in the future as more people age and rely on family members to participate in the paid workforce.”

Final report of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission, 2009

The aged and community care puzzle



Supporting older Australians

- 454,000 carers over the age of 65 (1 in 5)
- 28,000 of these older carers (over 65 years of age) care for an adult child
- 'Sandwich' generation carers
- Older carers
- Carers of older people
- Carers of older people can be of any age



A changing care environment

- Ageing population
- Increased disability rates
- Reduced carer-ratio
- Move away from institutional care
- Ageing in-place
- What does this mean for family carers?



"I want to look after him as long as I am able so we can both remain at home. I promised to look after him in sickness and health."

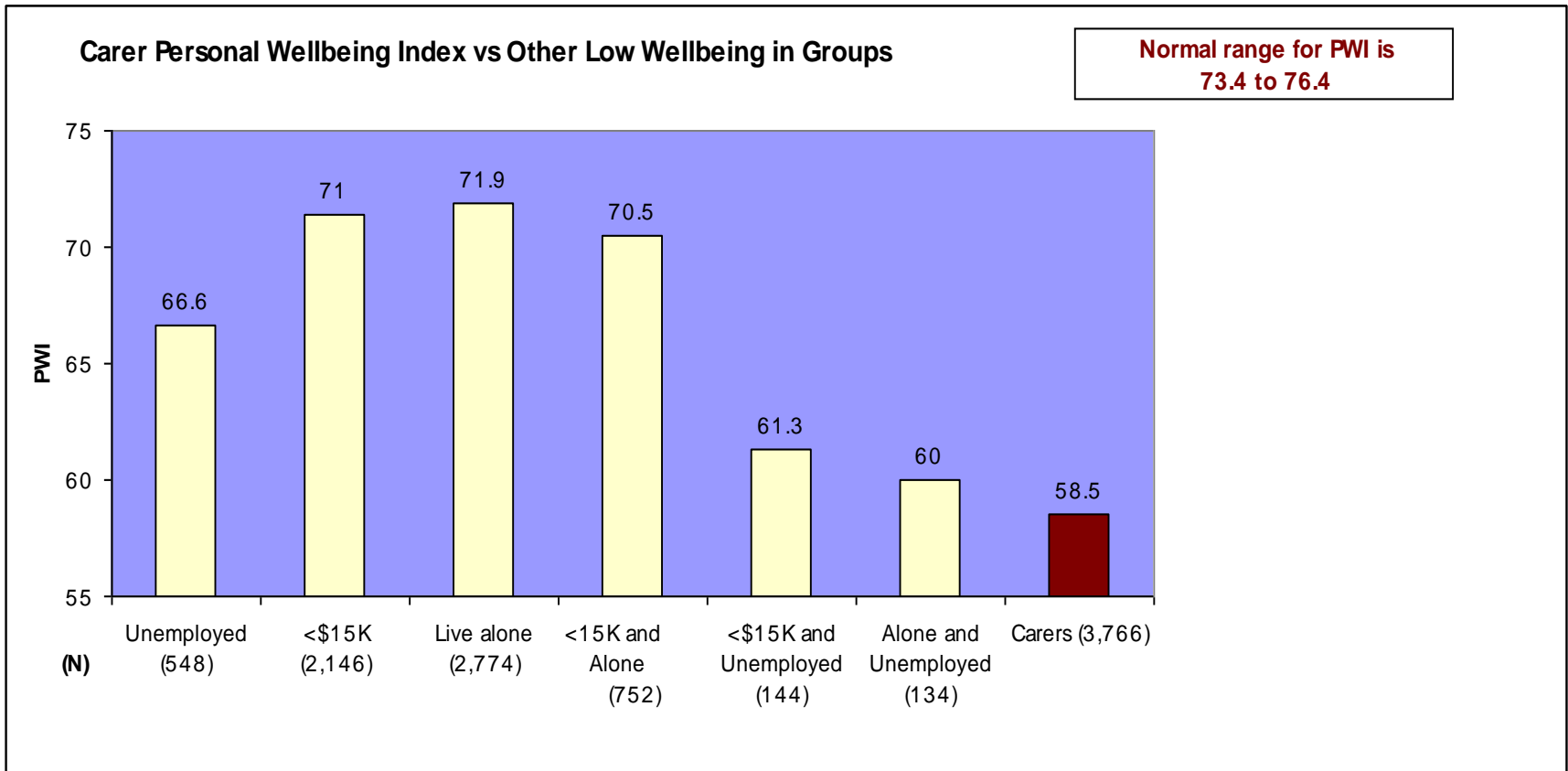
Inclusion for family carers

- Part of the care team
- Understanding
- Information
- Consultation
- Individuals in their own right
- Consideration of their wishes alongside the person receiving care and support



“I want them to understand that I’m here and that I have a role to play in all of this. The decisions affect me too.”

Health and Wellbeing



Specialised support

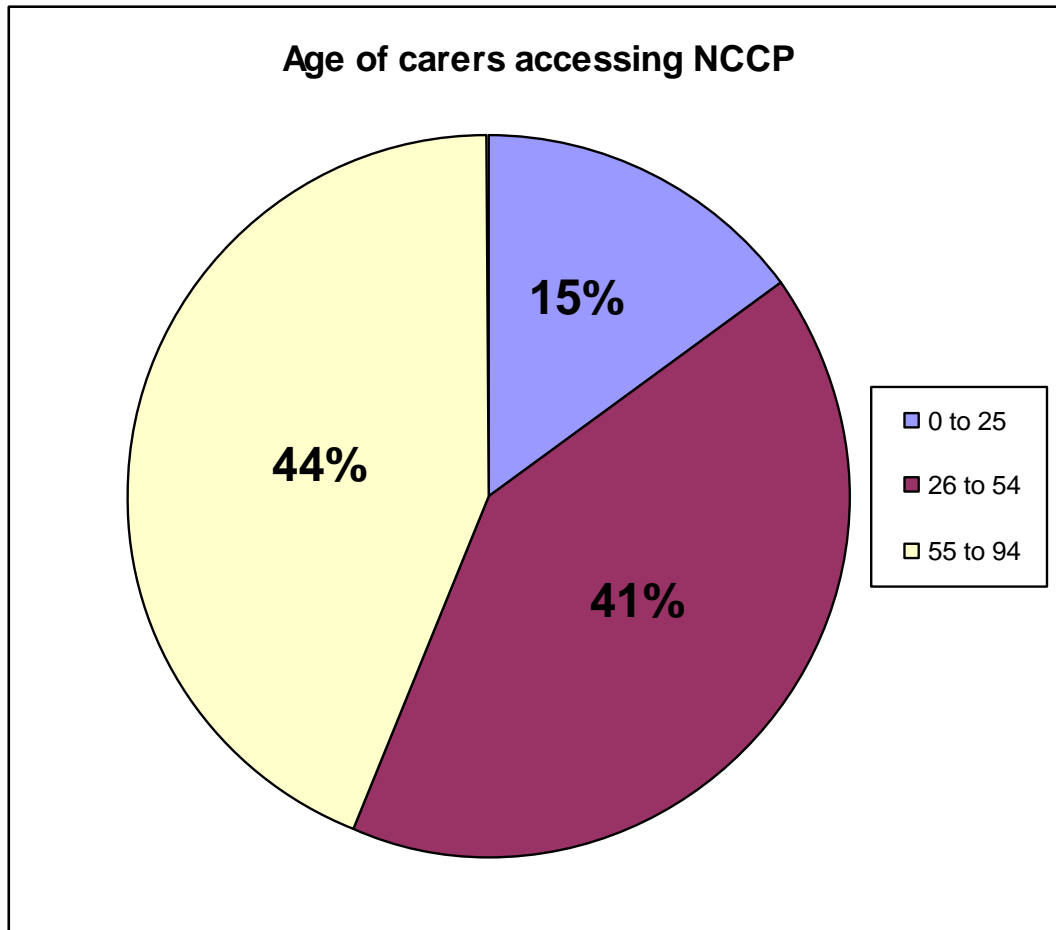
- Practical assistance
- Financial support
- Counselling
- Information and advice
- Respite
- Advocacy
- Education and training
- Future planning



“Caring...requires the carer to develop the skills necessary to recognise, understand and manage the nature and complexities of the disability or condition, often to a high level of proficiency.”

Report of the Carer Payment (child) Review Taskforce, 2008

National Carers Counselling Program



Principles of effective carer support

- Whole-of-family
- Understanding and respect
- Affordable
- Accessible
- Good communication



"A familiar phrase when carers are talking amongst themselves is "why didn't someone tell me about that" or "why wasn't i told".

Looking to the future

- National Carer Recognition Framework
- Inclusion in health system reforms
- Productivity Commission Inquiries
 - Long Term Care and Support
 - Caring for Older Australians
- Consumer-Directed Care Packages



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