



Monday 12 August 2019

## Support for informal carers under the spotlight at Royal Commission into aged care.

The importance of informal care and the difficulties that carers experience was under the spotlight this week during the Mildura hearings of The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

Dementia Australia CEO Maree McCabe believes that it is important the role of informal carers is recognised by the Royal Commission.

"There are more than 300,000 Australians providing informal/unpaid assistance to people with dementia in Australia," Ms McCabe said, "and the vast majority of people with dementia living in the community (91%) rely on an informal carer to support them."

"If we are to support people with dementia to live at home for as long as possible, there is a great need for effective community interventions and services to support carers in their role; to help reduce negative impacts such as isolation and illness, and to help increase self-efficacy, resilience and wellbeing

In her statement to the Royal Commission, Dementia Advocate and volunteer, Danijela Hlis, said that there is a lack of understanding as to the demands of being a carer.

"I was totally unprepared and unaware of what it is to give up your life and career and dedicate yourself to the lives of your parents. But that is what caring is," Ms Hlis said.

"You cannot do anything for yourself without making great organisational plans as to how to replace yourself so that somebody else is going to do something for the ones you care for.

We should never be looking at home care assistance packages for the client alone. The client and the carer are a partnership, and so when ... assistance is given, both should be taken into consideration." She said.

With the growing number of people living with dementia, Dementia Australia also predicts a rise in the number of carers.

"Australia is facing a significant increase in the number of people with dementia and this in turn will lead to an increase in the number of people providing informal care," Ms McCabe said.

"Most people with dementia and their families prefer that the person with dementia remain living at home for as long as possible.

"If we are to support people with dementia to live at home for as long as possible, there is a great need for effective community interventions and services to support carers in their role, to help reduce negative impacts such as isolation and illness, and to help increase self-efficacy, resilience and wellbeing."

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Dementia Australia is the national peak body and charity for people, of all ages, living with all forms of dementia, their families and carers. It provides advocacy, support services, education and information. An estimated 436,000 people have dementia in Australia. This number is projected to reach almost 1.1 million by 2058. Dementia Australia is the new voice of Alzheimer's Australia. Dementia Australia's services are supported by the Australian Government.

**National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500**

**Interpreter service available**

(The National Dementia Helpline is an Australian Government Initiative)

**Dementia is a National Health Priority Area**

[www.dementia.org.au](http://www.dementia.org.au)

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When talking or writing about dementia please refer to [Dementia Language Guidelines](#).