

Grants for WA Carers

ASK: Up to \$400,000 annual reoccurring grants for carer hardship and carer short breaks (respite).

The Problem



Caring has significant negative impacts on employment, income, superannuation, lost wages, recognition, and study or work time.



Caring takes someone out of the workforce, creates immediate financial stress, impacts bill payments, and makes raising funds difficult. Short-term financial effects can quickly escalate into long-term issues.



Some carers face unmet basic needs, including food shortages, unsafe housing, lack of affordable healthcare, unreliable internet, and transport access.



Carers experience high levels of social isolation, loneliness, psychological distress and low wellbeing, affecting their role and necessitating breaks.

The Solution

Carers WA calls for the establishment of a carer grants program, consisting of:

- Up to \$250,000 for carer hardship grants.
- Up to \$150,000 for reimplementation of small grants for Carers WA Short Breaks (respite) program for carers.
- Carers WA will fund in-kind contributions of:
 - A 0.6 FTE for the management and distribution of Short Breaks and hardship grants to carers and carers groups.
 - Development of systems, payment structure and registration.
 - A dedicated phone line will be provided with an online application process, and use of existing pathways and partnerships.

WA carers facing hardship can annually secure a \$2,000 grant with proof of difficulties like living costs, rent, utilities, etc. This is a broader hardship focus than existing grant programs, and is targeted to WA carers.



Carers Count
WA 2025 Election

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All carers should:



Be able to have their basic needs met including food, housing, utilities, affordable health services, internet access and access to reliable transport.



Have the ability to engage in social and economic participation throughout their caring role.



Have the opportunity to take a short break from caring to focus on their own wellbeing

33%

of WA carers were unable to raise \$2,000 for something important.

33%

of WA carers had spent more money on caring for their family member than they received in a month.

15%

of WA carers could not pay their gas, electricity, water or telephone bill on time.

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Voices of WA Carers

'Most carers I know have lost fulfilling careers, have limited superannuation, and quite simply cannot afford many of the things that non-carers can. My future and the futures of my carer friends quite frankly look very bleak. I'm fearful for my future and future security. I certainly won't have children who have any capacity to look after me if I become ill or when I'm old'. – response from a carer.

Note: Quote not attributed to the carer pictured.

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What is Working Elsewhere

- The Hardship Utility Grant Scheme (HUGS) - Assists people who are in financial hardship and are unable to pay utility bills, to assist in maintaining their connection to essential services. This program focuses on utility bills only.
- WA Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Fund - Provides financial assistance to individuals for the alleviation and relief of distress, suffering and personal hardships, brought about by any disaster or emergency within Western Australia. This program focuses on disaster and emergency situations.
- Caring for Carers Emergency Relief Program – A previously run unfunded project by Rural Lifestyle Options Australia to support carers who require financial assistance to meet their immediate essential needs. Funding allocation for this program was exhausted as at May 2023 until further notice.

Alignment to Legislative and Policy Frameworks

- WA Carers Strategy – Recognises the significant impact of caring and the need to support carers to balance their caring responsibilities, personal wellbeing and life outside of caring.
- Carers Recognition Act 2004 (WA) – The WA Carers Charter states that carers must be recognised, treated with respect and dignity, and that the views and needs of carers must be taken into account.
- Review of the Carers Recognition Act 2004: Report to Parliament – Supports Findings 2 & 3 of the Review, in which it is stated that further action is required to achieve greater and wider community awareness, recognition and understanding of carers.