

Carer Gateway Stakeholder Kit 2022



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Dear Colleagues, Friends and Community

In the past few years, many of us have continued or commenced caring for relatives or friends during a very challenging time. As First Nations peoples, we have unique knowledge, experience and ways of caring for those we look after. In our own ways we often don't see what we do as 'carers' in the same way as the Western way of caring. It's just what we do. It's our cultural responsibility and a natural part of the cycle of life. Caring for others can also bring stress and the needs and health of carers can be neglected. It's important to look after yourself if you are caring for others.

The Australian Government recognises the significant role that carers play in society. To support carers, the Department of Social Services has developed Carer Gateway, which provides in-person, online and phone-based supports to Australia's 2.65 million carers.

Carer Gateway offers practical information, advice and delivers services to carers in their local area. It is designed to make carer supports and services easier to navigate and more accessible, regardless of where carers live.

Carer Gateway supports unpaid carers, rather than the paid care and support workforce. Carers may receive support payments, such as Carer Payment and/or Carer Allowance where eligible through Services Australia. This is separate to Carer Gateway services but carers can still access both at the same time.

To further raise the awareness around the supports available to First Nations carers, a stakeholder kit has been developed incorporating useful resources and information about carer support and services. We hope you can share the kit and its resources with your networks and contribute to promoting the importance of carers seeking support and looking after themselves while caring for others.

Carers at times don't realise until crisis point that their own needs are being neglected or they don't have the time and resources to be able to look after themselves. We all have a role to keep each other strong, and we ask for families, friends, workplaces and community to support our carers by directing them to Carer Gateway if they need some help.

For more information, call 1800 422 737 or visit carergateway.gov.au. There is a section dedicated to First Nations peoples on the carergateway.gov.au/first-nations that includes broadcast advertising print resources, fact sheets, brochures and real-life stories. Thank you for supporting this important project.

Kind regards,

Yatu Widders-Hunt

General Manager
Cox Inall Ridgeway

What is the Carer Gateway campaign about?



A range of resources have been developed by the Department of Social Services to support a new national campaign to raise awareness of Carer Gateway. The resources in this kit are anchored around **keeping ourselves and our communities strong** and supporting First Nations carers and communities.

As many of you know, for First Nations peoples, caring is seen as a natural part of the cycle of life and a cultural and family obligation. Caring is also seen as a community responsibility, not solely an individual duty. We know that many First Nations peoples are often caring for several different people and have caring roles at different stages in their life. Importantly, most First Nations peoples do not speak of caring as a burden or difficult, and so rarely seek support for themselves.

The resources in the kit cover a range of issues including supporting people to identify what supports they may need for themselves when they're caring for someone and importantly before a crisis occurs. If a crisis does occur, Carer Gateway can provide some emergency assistance. The aim of the campaign is to:

- **increase awareness of Carer Gateway as a support for carers and other relevant services and resources; and**
- **increase help seeking behaviours for carers who require support before reaching crisis**

In addition to linking to some of the social content, this stakeholder kit shares a number of case studies, which highlight the experiences of First Nations carers and demonstrate the supports they've received and benefited from through Carer Gateway.

We would like your assistance in supporting the campaign by sharing resources, social posts and telling your communities about Carer Gateway. The key message of the campaign is:

Our communities are strongest when everyone is strong, and Carer Gateway is here to support you. There is practical information and advice, and you can connect to your local services. It provides carers with access to in-person, online and phone-based supports and services.

WHAT IS CARER GATEWAY AND WHO IS IT FOR?

Carer Gateway provides free support services and information to people who provide care and support to a family member or friend. It maybe because they live with disability, a medical condition, mental illness or are frail due to age.

It doesn't matter if carers receive a government payment or not, they can still access Carer Gateway. After all, every caring situation is different.

Some carers look after another person 24 hours a day and help with daily living, while others support people for a few hours to help with everyday things. Carer Gateway is for all unpaid carers.

HOW ARE SERVICES PROVIDED?

A range of service providers across Australia provide Carer Gateway services to carers in local communities.

Services are provided in-person, online and via phone.

WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE?

Coaching

Carers can access self-guided and in-person coaching, to assist in learning new ways to manage stress and improve wellbeing in your area.

Counselling

Carers can access in-person or telephone counselling, to talk through their current situation and help with feelings of stress and sadness.

Emergency respite

If a carer falls sick or is injured and can't continue looking after who they care for, emergency services will offer respite while the carer recovers.

Call 1800 422 737 at any time to seek emergency respite.

Community and connecting with other carers

Carer Gateway gives carers the opportunity to connect with others in similar situations. Carers can share stories, knowledge, and experiences to learn from and support each other. Carers can join an in-person group or online community, where they can speak with others who care for a family member or friend.

Online skills courses

Carer Gateway offers carers the opportunity to learn new skills through its online courses. Carers can learn how to handle stress, and improve health and safety.

Tailored support package

Carer Gateway offers tailored support packages to assist in their roles. This may include:

- Services or equipment to help with continued education, for example tutoring, educational supplies or training courses
- Planned respite, where a service provider steps in to take care of the family member or friend while the carer takes a break
- Cooking and cleaning services
- Assistance with shopping
- Transport, to help carers do things like go to medical appointments or do shopping

Continued overleaf

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

Sharing stories and empowering those who need support to seek it, is one of the most important actions we can take to **keep ourselves and our communities strong** and support First Nations carers. There are lots of ways you can use this stakeholder kit and continue to support communities. You can:

- Share the social media content developed. These can be accessed through carergateway.gov.au/first-nations. You're welcome to share these on your Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts or through any electronic direct mail correspondence you may have.
- Promote the case studies within your networks, staffing groups and communities as examples of the experience of First Nations carers and the support and services they received and benefited from Carer Gateway.
- Share examples from your own communities and families of First Nations carers getting support from Carer Gateway and looking after themselves. Share them on social media and use the hashtag **#firstnationscarers**



HOW DO PEOPLE CONTACT CARER GATEWAY?

- ▶ Call Carer Gateway on **1800 422 737** Monday–Friday between 8am–5pm to speak with your local service provider about the supports and services available to you. Emergency respite is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week on the same number.
- ▶ If you need information in a language other than English, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on **131 450**.
- ▶ If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can call the National Relay Service on **133 677**.
- ▶ Online services and more information is available on the Carer Gateway website: carergateway.gov.au



Campaign Key Messages

Single Key Message

Our communities are strongest when everyone is strong, and Carer Gateway is here to support you. There is practical information and advice, and free services available in-person, online and over the phone.

Primary supporting messages

- Carer Gateway is one place for carers to access information, services like phone counselling and free online courses, which can help with work, study and caring.
- Carer Gateway helps to connect you with other carers and is a safe place for our communities to seek support and friendship.
- Carer Gateway makes accessing information, support and local services easier.
- There are many ways to connect with Carer Gateway. Carers can connect with Carer Gateway in-person, online and over the phone.
- Caring is a natural part of our cycle of life and our cultural and family obligations.
- Caring is a family and community responsibility.
- Caring can be both enjoyable and challenging. It's OK to reach out for support because it's important that carers also care for themselves.
- Caring can look different for everyone. If you care for someone in your family or community, Carer Gateway is a place you can go to get free support, find information, develop skills and improve your social and emotional wellbeing.

Secondary supporting messages

- Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) are the trusted services in the community and can help connect carers to Carer Gateway.
- Not all carers will ask for help. If you notice a carer struggling, direct them to Carer Gateway to help them access the support they might need.

Resources

Video Animation

Please find the campaign video animation on the Carer Gateway website:

carergateway.gov.au/first-nations

Social Media Content

Please find ready to use social media content on the Carer Gateway website:

carergateway.gov.au/first-nations

Here are some examples that you can use across your social media networks:

Post copy	Image
<p>Do you look after your Nan or Pop, Aunts or Uncles, someone with disability or a health concern? Sometimes it's easy to forget about yourself.</p> <p>Carer Gateway supports First Nations carers to access practical information and advice, and free services available in-person, online and over the phone.</p> <p>For more information or to access Carer Gateway today, call 1800 422 737 or visit carergateway.gov.au/first-nations.</p>	
<p>If you care for someone with disability, or who is sick or older in your family or community, Carer Gateway is a place you can go to get free support.</p> <p>You'll find information, free online courses, and improve your social and emotional wellbeing.</p> <p>Our communities are strongest when everyone is strong. And it's OK to reach out for support.</p> <p>For more information or to access Carer Gateway today call 1800 422 737 or visit carergateway.gov.au/first-nations.</p>	

Social Media Content continued:

Post copy	Image
<p>For First Nations people, caring for someone in our family or community is a natural part of our cycle of life. It is a cultural and family obligation. But you don't have to do it alone.</p> <p>Carer Gateway helps connect you with other carers, and is a safe place for our communities to seek support and friendship.</p> <p>For more information or to access Carer Gateway today, call 1800 422 737 or visit carergateway.gov.au/first-nations.</p>	
<p>Carer Gateway makes accessing support and local services easier.</p> <p>It is a place for carers to find information, access services like phone counselling, and do free online courses that can help with work, study and caring.</p> <p>For more information or to access Carer Gateway today, call 1800 422 737 or visit carergateway.gov.au/first-nations.</p>	
<p>There are many ways to connect with Carer Gateway. Carers can connect with Carer Gateway over the phone or online.</p> <p>For more information or to access Carer Gateway today, call 1800 422 737 or visit carergateway.gov.au/first-nations.</p>	
<p>Caring can be both enjoyable and challenging, and it's important that carers also look after themselves.</p> <p>Our communities are strongest when everyone is strong, and Carer Gateway is here to support you.</p> <p>For more information or to access Carer Gateway today, call 1800 422 737 or visit carergateway.gov.au/first-nations.</p>	

Fact sheets

Please find informative fact sheets on the Carer Gateway website: carergateway.gov.au/first-nations

Images

Please find ready to use images on the Carer Gateway website: carergateway.gov.au/first-nations

Case Studies



Case study 1: Sierra's story, caring for my mum

I'm a proud Wiradjuri woman, living on Country (Bathurst) and I'm the sole carer for my mum. Her illness impacts her physically and mentally, and she often doesn't feel comfortable or safe leaving the house. I'm 24 years old and I've cared for my mum most of my life. Being a carer is part of who I am and caring for family is a big part of my culture.

My typical day changes depending on how mum is coping with her pain. Some days she needs me to do almost everything for her, but other days she is quite independent. I usually help her get ready for the day, drive her to any appointments, and do the cooking and chores around the house. Most days I don't have lunch because there's lots to do and not enough time. I always take an hour or so to sit with mum so that she has some social interaction. In the evening I try to take some time to relax and have some 'me time' where I read, do homework or watch TV, but I'm always keeping an ear out if mum needs my help. During the night I'm often up with mum multiple times checking that she's OK and helping her with anything she needs.

I don't feel like a normal 24 year old, I have a lot of challenges other young people don't have. I've had to put off a lot of education, I don't date and when I do go out with friends, it requires a lot of consideration and planning to make sure mum will be alright. I also struggle with balancing caring for mum, studying and working. Most carers can understand that you don't have time to wallow, you just keep going.

Despite the challenges, I enjoy having a closer relationship with mum. I'm great at teamwork and time management, and I've gained lots of helpful life skills like cooking, cleaning and paying bills, which I'm often teaching my friends how to do.

"I don't feel like a normal 24 year old, I have a lot of challenges other young people don't have. I've had to put off a lot of education, I don't date and when I do go out with friends, it requires a lot of consideration and planning to make sure mum will be alright."



Growing up being a carer meant I withdrew a lot, which started taking a large toll on my mental and physical health. I was scared to ask for help and felt like it was hard to approach new services because I would have to tell my story over and over again. Thankfully, my sister reached out for help for me and there was more support available than I had ever realised. I now know that no one is going to judge me if I'm struggling and that everyone's welcome and deserving of support, no matter who they are or their level of caring.

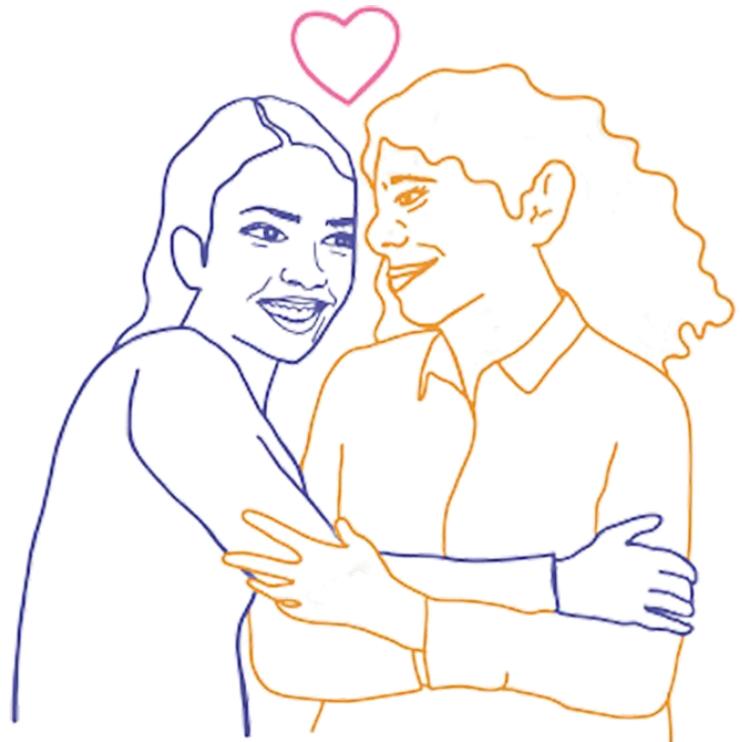
Through Carer Gateway, I have connected with a case worker who I see as a great support and friend. She rings and checks in with me every couple of weeks, or more often if she knows I'm having a hard time. It was daunting to tell Carer Gateway my story, but I only had to say it once. My information is now kept on file and I don't have to repeat it every time I need support. Carer Gateway has provided a lawn mowing service and funding to

buy a new laptop so I could continue studying. I often encourage my friends who are also carers to reach out to Carer Gateway because it's helped me in many ways.

My connection to culture also supports me, and my community is like a big extended family around me. They're always happy to help and show me I'm not alone, and that I've got this.

Carer Gateway is there to support me and anyone caring for someone in their family or community.

If you need help you can call Carer Gateway or visit the website to get free and easily accessible support, find practical information, develop skills and improve your social and emotional wellbeing. Carer Gateway delivers services in your local area.



“Through Carer Gateway, I have connected with a case worker who I see as a great support and friend. She rings and checks in with me every couple of weeks, or more often if she knows I’m having a hard time. It was daunting to tell Carer Gateway my story, but I only had to say it once.”

Our communities are strongest when everyone is strong and it's ok to reach out for support.
Call **1800 422 737** or visit carergateway.gov.au/first-nations



Case study 2:

Looking after family members with mental illness

I live on Larrakia Country (Darwin) and I've been caring for two members of my family my entire life. They both live with mental illness, and go through periods of time when they are ok and others when they are very unwell. I see caring for them as a family obligation that is made easier when I reach out for the support and self-care I need.

When I was young, I helped around the home and looked after my sibling when my mum was unwell and went away for long periods of time. This was a really hard time because I didn't understand what was wrong and there was little-to-no support for mental illnesses in my community. As I grew up, I realised I needed more support to care for my family.

As a young adult, it became clear I had forgotten to look after myself for a long time and I decided to move out of home for my own social and emotional wellbeing. This helps keep me well and makes me a stronger carer for my family.

When I'm caring for them, my typical day involves helping to clean their house, driving them around town and to appointments, connecting them to services they might need, and being available in the case of an emergency. I also often sit with them, which gives them an opportunity to talk to someone because at times they can be very lonely and isolated.

There have been many challenging times in my life, but through focusing on caring for myself I'm now able to enjoy caring for my family members. They are quite vulnerable in the community, so I get a lot of good feelings helping them get around and do things. When they're getting help and are mentally well, it's an amazing feeling for me because I've got my family back.

"This was a really hard time because I didn't understand what was wrong and there was little-to-no support for mental illnesses in my community. As I grew up, I realised I needed more support to care for my family."

When I was younger, I didn't know what support was available and I wasn't confident to reach out for help because of feelings of shame and embarrassment. But I realised it was really important for me to get support for my own mental health. It's easy for carers to feel isolated and become quite unwell without even realising it.

Your own wellbeing can easily spin out of control, so it's very helpful to have a support network, friends and fun things to do. I still cry from time to time and feel anxious for my family, but I'm able to look after myself by being supported by services like Carer Gateway.

I really like using Carer Gateway. My favourite thing is that it's a safe place to find information, which is easier than browsing the internet for the support I need. There's information on a whole range of topics and I've learnt about respite and guardianship. Through Carer Gateway, I was able to connect with a cleaning service in my local area that took the load off my shoulders.

"I really like using Carer Gateway. My favourite thing is that it's a safe place to find information, which is easier than browsing the internet for the support I need."



As carers, we often don't have a lot of time to look for support, but Carer Gateway has been designed with a carer in mind and is easy to use. Accessing face-to-face support has been harder than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic, but Carer Gateway has been very helpful in providing me access to online and phone-based supports and services.

Carer Gateway is there to support me and anyone caring for someone in their family or community.

If you need support, you can call Carer Gateway or visit the website to get free and easily accessible support, find practical information, develop skills and improve your social and emotional wellbeing. Carer Gateway delivers services in your local area.

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Call **1800 422 737** or visit **carergateway.gov.au/first-nations**



Case study 3:

Caring for a family member after a stroke

In 2017 my husband had a stroke that left him partially paralysed and in a motorised wheelchair. I became his full-time carer because I really wanted to care for him at home. He looked after me for many years, so I saw it as my turn to take care of him. I continued to care for my husband up until he had a second stroke and passed away in late 2021.

My husband required 24-hour care and our day-to-day life always involved lots of planning. When I was caring for my husband, we often didn't divert from the usual routine. My typical day involved an early start helping him get up, out of bed and ready. We would usually have a cup of tea and sometimes do a prayer together.

During the day, I would take him to the park to see friends or drive him to medical appointments. Most appointments involved travelling long distances, usually around a 130km drive from home. Other than for those appointments, we couldn't travel too far in case he needed to go to the toilet because we didn't have the facilities to support him.

“Even though my family was always there to help us, at times I struggled with my social and emotional wellbeing. I often felt overwhelmed and worried if I was doing things the right way.”

Being a carer was demanding, but it also brought us closer together. We both had busy lives before his stroke and being his carer helped us appreciate each other. My husband was a bushman and we both loved life in the bush. He was very cultural, hardworking and kind-hearted. He was loved by many in the community. Going out on Country was very important to him, one of the things we enjoyed most together was driving out into the bush.

Even though my family was always there to help us, at times I struggled with my social and emotional wellbeing. I often felt overwhelmed and worried if I was doing things the right way. There were one or two times where I was at breaking point and just needed some time out.

This is when I realised it was important to ask for help. Everyone should be able to look after a loved one if they want to and be supported through it.

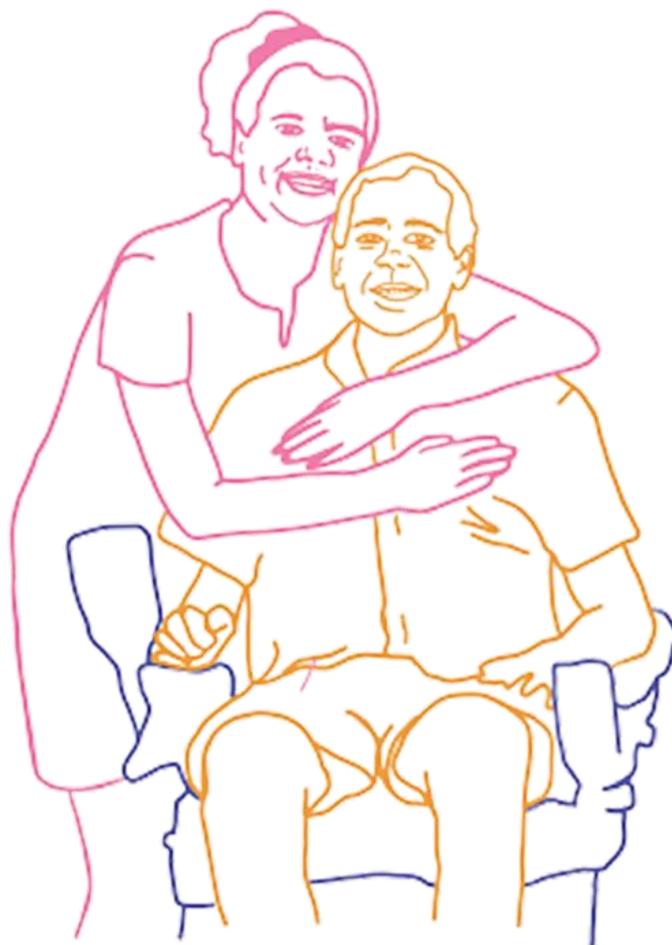
I know that sometimes it can be hard to reach out for help. You might need support right now that you can't always get, or you might feel shameful about sharing sensitive parts of your life. I used to be a very private person, but now I would always suggest reaching out for support because people can be more helpful than you would ever imagine. Practical support makes a big difference.

I learnt about Carer Gateway after my husband passed, and it's been a good way for me to access information and connect to support services. The information about end-of-life planning and loss helped me – in grief I feel a strength coming to me.

I really recommend Carer Gateway to all carers. I really like the information on health and wellbeing, and the tips for eating well, sleeping and good mental health.

Carer Gateway is there to support me and anyone caring for someone in their family or community.

If you need help you can call Carer Gateway or visit the website to get free and easily accessible support, find practical information, develop skills and improve your social and emotional wellbeing. Carer Gateway delivers services in your local area.



“I learnt about Carer Gateway after my husband passed, and it’s been a good way for me to access information and connect to support services. The information about end-of-life planning and loss helped me – in grief I feel a strength coming to me.”

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Statements from SECTION TITLE First Nations Stakeholders

Statement 1: Sometimes people don't identify with the term 'carer' as it can be interpreted in different ways. Support is available whatever your caring role looks like. – First Nations stakeholder

Statement 2: We're privileged to care for our Elders because they have a lot to give back to the community. By supporting myself, I'm a better carer for them. – First Nations stakeholder

Statement 3: Us Mob all have experiences of being an unpaid carer, like getting called in the middle of the night. You've got to go when you've got to go. It's just the way it's done. – First Nations stakeholder

Statement 4: Having connection to family and community is an important cultural need of First Nations carers. Carer Gateway helps to connect you with other carers, and is a safe place for our communities to seek support and friendship. – First Nations stakeholder

Statement 5: In my experience, carers often don't believe they're entitled for help. They say there must be people out there that need it more. No matter if the help you need is big or small, Carer Gateway can support you. – First Nations stakeholder

Statement 6: Not all carers will ask for help. If you notice a carer struggling, direct them to Carer Gateway to help them access the support they might need. – First Nations stakeholder



Contact

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