

# Media Release

13 October 2023

## National Carers Week: Caring for Tasmanian Carers

National Carers Week (15-21 October) is a chance to thank, celebrate and raise awareness about the one in six Tasmanians who are caring for a family member or friend.

“Carers are in our families, our workplaces, our parent groups, sitting next to us at the basketball or soccer, or living just up the street,” Carers Tasmania CEO Dr Samantha Fox said.

“Anyone at any time can become a carer for a family member or friend, often without warning and with no alternatives.

“Each day I meet carers who have given up their careers, travel, homes, income and their own wellbeing to care for someone they love.”

Dr Fox said the 2022 National Carer Survey revealed that three in five Tasmanian carers experienced financial stress and almost half felt socially isolated.

“Tasmanian carers on average spend more than 100 hours per week caring and have been caring for more than 11 years,” she said.

“They give up around \$39,600 in earnings and \$17,700 in superannuation for each year they are a primary carer.

“In Tasmania, it would cost around \$2.2 billion if the care provided by family and friends was undertaken by the state health system or paid professionals.

“It’s time to value our carers.”

That includes carers like Maria, who cares for her husband John as he battles Parkinson’s disease.

“There’s a lot of worrying - you’re on tenterhooks because you never know what’s going to be required of you on any given day,” Maria said.

“Making sure that he’s safe all the time is my main worry.

“Always being there, being on call all the time ... it affects your mental health, your emotional wellbeing, and your time management. You’ve got to plan your own life around it.

“Even if people know you’re caring for someone, they don’t realise how much is involved in that, how much emotional energy you’re putting into that 24/7.



“It gets very tiring. It’s a slow-burn tiredness which gets very wearing. And I’ve only been going for a year; I’m a bit worried about how I’m going to go in the future.”

Maria encouraged other carers to reach out to Care2Serve, Tasmania’s Carer Gateway to see what assistance is available.

“We’re getting meals delivered three days a week which is a great help,” she said.

“I am also getting counselling from a psychologist through Care2Serve, and the peer group meetings are helpful and informative too.

“Through Care2Serve we’ve also recently started getting some help once a fortnight with the housework, which gives me a bit of a break. It’s wonderful.”

This National Carers Week, Carers Tasmania and Care 2Serve encourage people to host a *Cuppa with a Carer* morning tea to celebrate carers and encourage them to reach out for help.

A series of morning teas and luncheons will be held across the state at locations including Kingston, Devonport, Scottsdale, Launceston and Hobart.

The media is invited to join Dr Samantha Fox and Tasmanian carers at the following events:

Monday 16 October: HOBART

10am - noon

Venue: Succulent Café, Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens

Available for interview/photos: Dr Samantha Fox and Maria, carer for her husband who lives with mental ill health.

Friday 20 October: LAUNCESTON

Launceston Carers Support Group

10.30am – 12:30pm

Venue: Jude’s Café, Tailrace Centre, Riverside

Available for interview/photos: Dr Samantha Fox and carers Robin Walker, Margaret Murray and Karen Price-Wood. Minister for Community Services and Development, the Hon Jo Palmer will be in attendance at this event from 11:15 am.

For more information about supporting carers, go to [www.carerstas.org](http://www.carerstas.org)

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## **About Carers Tasmania**

Carers Tasmania is the peak body representing the more than 80,000 informal carers in the state. Carers Tasmania's vision is for an Australia that values and supports carers. Carers Tasmania's mission is to work to improve the health, wellbeing, resilience, and financial security of carers and to ensure that caring is a shared responsibility of the family, community, and the government. Carers Tasmania has offices in Hobart, Launceston, and Burnie.

## **About Care2Serve**

Care2Serve is the service delivery arm of Carers Tasmania, the peak body for informal carers in the state and the sole provider of Carer Gateway program in Tasmania, an Australian Government Initiative to support family and friend carers. Care2Serve's vision is for Tasmania, where carers can access excellent services when needed. With a mission to work to improve the health, wellbeing, resilience, and financial security of carers and to ensure that caring is a shared responsibility of the family, community, and the government. Care2Serve has offices in Hobart, Launceston, and Burnie. If you need support for your caring role, please contact us on 1800 422 737 (and press 1)

## **About Carers**

An informal, unpaid carer is often a family member who cares for someone with chronic or life-limiting illness, with mental ill health, is frail or aged, with disability or alcohol or other drug dependence, or cares for a child under 18 years.

Informal carers are distinct from paid support workers, who are also colloquially called 'carers' but fully employed and remunerated with all the employment benefits. Conversely, family carers perform their caring duties without remuneration, other than minimal carer payments and allowances from the Department of Social Services.