

# Caring works

## Mature age workers with caring responsibilities



Many people have caring responsibilities

The NSW Carers Action Plan 2007-2012 outlines the NSW Government's strategy to assist carers.

It gives a snapshot of carers in NSW:

- There are 748,000 carers in NSW. Of these, 150,000 are primary carers, someone who gives the most assistance to another person in need of care.
- Over half of carers who provide ongoing assistance provide at least 20 hours of care a week.
- Caring tends to be a long term commitment - 33% of primary carers have been doing so for at least 10 years and a further 26% for at least 5 years.
- Carers have low incomes. More than half rely on government pensions and allowances as their principal source of income.
- Over 70% of carers are women.
- Primary carers are more likely to be 45 and over.

### Many people work... and care

- More than 2.5 million Australians (13% of all households) care for someone who is disabled, elderly or has a long term condition.(i)
- Many balance caring roles with paid employment and family responsibilities. Of the 2 million carers of working age in Australia in 2003, two-thirds were employed.(ii)
- Nevertheless, those without caring responsibilities are more likely to work. In 2003, three quarters of working age non-carers were employed.(iii)

- The more time consuming and onerous the caring responsibilities are, the less likely it is that carers will be in employment.

### Impact of caring upon work

There has been relatively little Australian research on the impact of caring responsibilities and the labour force participation of carers.

### Carers want to work (iv)

Research suggests that:

- many carers who are not in paid employment would like to work
- providing care was the main reason for leaving the job for those who had stopped work after commencing caring
- caring need not mean permanent withdrawal from the labour market.

### The impact of caring

Caring responsibilities impact on work in various way including:

- hours worked
- what the carer wants to do or is able to do
- leave arrangements.

Business operators meeting the current and future caring needs of older workers will keep valuable, loyal workers with years of experience behind them.

For information about employing mature aged workers with caring responsibilities visit [www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au](http://www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au)

(i) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, ABS, 2003

(ii and iii) Thomson, C, Hill, T, Bittman, M, and Griffiths, M, *What formal support services do employed carers need?*, Social Policy Research Centre, 10<sup>th</sup> AIFS conference – Families Through Life, 9-11 July 2008.

(iv) ABS Cat. No. 4102.0, Australian Social Trends 2005, *Services and Assistance: Carers*