

MEDIA RELEASE



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Carers Australia welcomes government's endorsement of the Young Carer Bursary Program

"Today's announcement that the Federal government will commit \$1 million to the continuation of the Young Carer Bursary Program in 2018 is very welcome", said Ara Cresswell, CEO of Carers Australia.

"A great many young carers under the age of 25 suffer significant educational challenges as a result of providing care to one or more family members with disability, chronic illness and mental health conditions.

"In many cases they not only provide direct care to a family member but are also placed in the position of running the household and often looking after younger siblings because the parent they care for is not in a position to do so. Many of these young carers are in their early teens and the vast majority of young carers who have benefitted from the Bursary are from single parent, low income households.

"The impact of these combined circumstances on their educational participation is immense and this educational disadvantage is likely to undermine their employment prospects and other aspects of their wellbeing later in life.

"The Bursary has met a number of the educational needs of those who have received it, including extra tutoring to make up time lost from school or tertiary education, the capacity to participate in extra-curricular activities which attract fees, and the purchasing of essential equipment needed for their studies, such as computers and the costs maintaining access to the internet.

"Very importantly, the financial assistance provided has alleviated at least one of the stressors in their lives.

"The Young Carer Bursary Program was introduced in 2015 with a three year commitment and the evaluation of the outcomes for the individuals who have benefitted from the program to date was completed earlier this year. We are very relieved that further funding has been committed for 2018 and hope that in future years this kind of assistance will become an embedded element of the carer support landscape."

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