



In SESLHD

A carer is anyone who provides ongoing unpaid support to family or friends who need help because of disability, chronic, terminal or mental illness or who are frail aged.¹

In SESLHD, 10% of the population over the age of 15 years are carers with 60% of the carer population being women.²

Population Profile

The majority of carers are aged between 50 and 69 years (70%).

Carers of people with disability in SESLHD provide care for partners (38%); children (29.6%) and parents (22%).³

The St George area (Georges River LGA and Rockdale LGA) has the highest percentage of carers by population across SESLHD (28% of the district population; 32% of the total carer population).

Issues and challenges

Carers have their own health care needs, separate from the needs of those for whom they provide care. Carers' self-reported wellbeing is significantly lower than that of the general Australian population.⁴ The caring role places carers at higher risk of poorer physical and mental health. Factors contributing to poorer health include caring for a child with a disability; caring for a person with high care needs; caring for more than one person; and needing more support than the carer is currently receiving.⁵

Carers are also more likely to experience financial hardship (with many on low incomes) and may have limited life opportunities in relation to education, employment and relationships. In 2015 Access Economics reported that unpaid informal carers provided an estimated 1.9 billion hours of care. The replacement value for these hours of care was estimated at \$60.3 billion.⁶

Groups of carers with particular vulnerabilities include:

- young carers aged between 15 and 25 years of age (9% of the carer population);
- Aboriginal carers (37% of the carer population);
- carers who speak a language other than English (11% of the carer population);
- carers who themselves have a disability (36% of primary carers of people with a disability have a disability themselves)⁶;
- older carers aged over 85 years (6% of the carer population) who have the highest need for assistance across all carer age groups; and
- working carers (48% of primary carers of people with disability are in the workforce).⁶

1. NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010, www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/ca2010197/s5.html

2. For the purpose of this report, carers are considered to be people aged 15 years and over

3. StatWorks, 2018, SESLHD Special tables derived from the 2015 ABS Survey of Disability and Carers (SDAC)

4. Carers NSW, 2016, Carers NSW 2016 Carers Survey, available at <https://www.carersnsw.org.au/research/survey>

5. Edwards, Ben et al, 2008 The nature and impact of caring for family members with a disability in Australia, Research Report No. 16 – June 2008 <https://aifs.gov.au/publications/nature-and-impact-caring-family-members-di/executive-summary>

6. Deloitte Access Economics, The economic value of informal care in Australia 2015, Carers Australia, June 2015