



WORK&CARE

THE NECESSARY INVESTMENT

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR CARER-FRIENDLY WORKPLACES



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'CARER'?

A CARER IS SOMEONE WHO PROVIDES UNPAID CARE AND SUPPORT TO FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS WHO HAVE A DISABILITY, MENTAL ILLNESS, CHRONIC CONDITION OR TERMINAL ILLNESS, AND THOSE WHO ARE FRAIL AGED.

THERE ARE 2.7 MILLION CARERS IN AUSTRALIA.



**12% OF ALL
WORKING
AUSTRALIANS
ARE CARERS**



Combining Work and Care

To remain competitive, businesses need to attract and retain skilled and committed employees. In Australia there are many employees who combine paid work with caring for someone with a disability, mental illness, chronic condition or terminal illness or someone who is frail aged. Providing specific workplace arrangements for these carers has significant benefits for businesses including reducing recruitment and training costs by increasing staff retention, and increasing the productivity and job satisfaction of employees.

With advances in healthcare, the elderly, chronically ill and those with disabilities are now living longer at the same time as the working age population is decreasing in relative terms. With the proportion of Australia's population aged over 65 years continuing to increase, Australia will soon reach the 'tipping point' for care, when there are likely to be fewer informal carers relative to the growing older population.

These demographic trends will see more employees needing to take on a caring role than ever before. Many of these carers will be between the peak working ages of 45–64 years. It is critical that businesses are able to retain these experienced employees.

Offering flexible workplace provisions which allow employees to combine paid work with an unpaid caring role is essential to enabling businesses to foster a productive, efficient and effective workforce.



**"THE MORE EXPERIENCED A
STAFF MEMBER, THE HIGHER
THE COSTS OF REPLACING
THEM IF THEY LEAVE."**



Carer-friendly workplaces make business sense

The more experienced a staff member, the higher the costs of replacing them if they leave. Employees are more likely to become carers between 45–64 years of age and failing to retain these experienced workers will represent a significant loss of resources and knowledge.

Carers are more likely to stay with an employer if their needs for flexibility are met. Implementing carer-friendly provisions is therefore a crucial investment in employee retention.

The benefits of becoming a carer-friendly workplace include:

- > Reduced costs of employee turnover
- > Increased staff morale
- > Increased productivity
- > Improved service delivery
- > Reducing employee stress and absenteeism
- > Attracting quality workers
- > Building a resilient workforce

66%

of all working age carers are
Employed



**"ANY EMPLOYEE CAN BECOME
A CARER AT ANY TIME..."**



About Australian carers in the workplace

- > Any employee can become a carer at any time – when a family member or friend has an accident or acquires an illness or disability, upon the birth of a child with a disability, or when an ageing parent becomes frail.
- > By the year 2027, over a fifth of Australia's population will be aged over 65 years. As the proportion of the population needing care increases, so too will the number of unpaid carers.
- > There are carers in all occupations and industries. Addressing the needs of carers in the workplace is an issue for *all* employers.



**56% of carers
are female**



**44% of carers
are male**

Carer-friendly workplace policies and practices

Carer-friendly workplaces can take on many forms. This depends on the size of the employer, the nature of the workplace, and the demands of the caring role faced by employees.

- > Carers may need access to flexible working arrangements in order to combine work with an unpaid caring role. This may involve different start and finish times, the option to work from home occasionally, or perhaps a shorter working week whilst still completing the hours of a full-time position.
- > Alternatively, carers may need flexible leave arrangements for planned or unplanned caring responsibilities. Leave arrangements may include compassionate or carers' leave for emergency or planned caring, or allowing carers to take a combination of paid and unpaid leave in order to fulfil caring responsibilities.
- > A workplace culture in which employees feel comfortable and are encouraged to request (and take up) flexible working provisions without the fear of reprisal or other negative repercussions from management – or other employees – is essential.
- > Supporting carers in the workplace could involve setting up a carers' network within the organisation or distributing information about how to find carer-supports in the community.

The data on carers used in this document has been drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC).

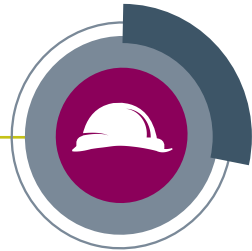
35%

of employed carers are
Managers and Professionals



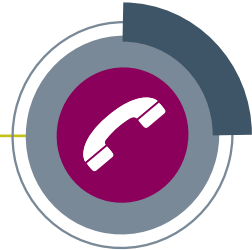
29%

of employed carers are **Technicians,
Trades Workers and Labourers**



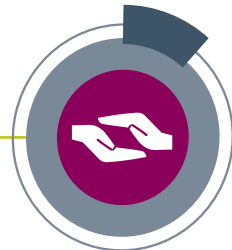
25%

of employed carers are **Clerical,
Administrative and Sales Workers**



11%

of employed carers are **Community
and Personal Service Workers**



“WITH AN AGEING POPULATION, BECOMING A CARER-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE MAKES BUSINESS SENSE. PROVIDING FLEXIBLE AND SUPPORTIVE WORKING CONDITIONS TO ENABLE EMPLOYEES TO COMBINE PAID WORK WITH AN UNPAID CARING ROLE WILL ENSURE EMPLOYERS ARE ABLE TO HOLD ONTO EXPERIENCED WORKERS.”

ARA CRESSWELL, CEO CARERS AUSTRALIA



**TO FIND OUT MORE VISIT THE
CARERS AUSTRALIA WEBSITE**

www.carersaustralia.com.au

