Carers Queensland is the peak body representing and advocating on behalf of almost 500,000 Queensland carers. Our mission is to improve the quality of life of all unpaid family carers throughout Queensland.

This year, we asked carers in Queensland to submit a photograph that demonstrated their life as a carer. We are pleased to share some of these stunning photographs with you in this annual report.

“Here is my caree Max, who suffers from Alzheimer’s disease, at Yorkies Knob Beach, where we went for a walk and a drink at the yacht club afterwards. It was a very cold day for Cairns, but it was very relaxing and enjoyable. Max enjoyed his glass of red after the walk.”

Nisha Shahid

Photography: Nisha Shahid
Foreword
Jim Toohey
President, Carers Queensland Inc.

Debra Cottrell
Chief Executive Officer, Carers Queensland Inc.

Empowering carers
Natasha Kaliocsi
Better Start Program
Young Carers
Counselling Service
Specialist Mental Health
Counselling Service
Carer Advisory Service
Carer Liaison and Support
Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CALD) Program

Inclusion
Carer Support Groups
Education and Training
Young Carer Bursaries
Laurinda Gardner
Beth Cavallari
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NDIS Participant Readiness Scheme
My Future: My Life
Year Life Your Choice
Karen Edwards

Speaking up
Systemic Advocacy and Research
Family Support and Advocacy Service
Carer Self-Advocacy Training
Fred Dykstra

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The major sources of additional one-off funding during the year
Acknowledgments

Empowering carers
Inclusion
Behind the scenes
Speaking up
Financial performance overview
Foreword

Welcome to the 2014/15 Annual Review of Carers Queensland’s activities over the financial year ending 30 June 2015.

Carers Queensland Inc. - Annual Report 2014/15
Disability profile of children registered with Better Start in the year

Counselling Service
This year we registered 351 children on to the Better Start program. Our Better Start team co-ordinated Moving Forwards workshops which gives families the opportunities to meet with agencies such as Disability services and allied health practitioners to explore options and opportunities for their child now and in the future.

Young Carers
During the year Carers Queensland provided specialist support and assistance to 521 young carers. This included 377 sessions of specialist counselling support provided by the Young Carer counsellor. We’re pleased to report that we achieved a 10% increase in contacts with young adult carers (19-25 years) and a 15% increase in ongoing contact with young carers in rural and remote Queensland.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CALD) Program
Our CALD program assists the carers of people who are frail aged, have a mental illness, chronic condition or have a disability and who also identify as culturally and linguistically diverse to access appropriate based community support services. In the last year 1268 clients received 5138 hours of assistance.

Empowering carers

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I could not have done all of this without the expertise and brilliance of our Better Start RIS advisor. She was able to open up options for us that we didn’t know existed. She encouraged us to seek the best for our daughter and helped create a better vision of what we wanted for her life.

Who seeks counselling?

27.34% Wife or female partner
15.97% Father
15.97% Mother
6.75% Husband or male partner
5.78% Daughter
4.76% Son
9.29% Daughter/son-in-law
0.86% Other relative
2.73% Friend
0.82% Rett’s Disorder
0.82% Prader Willi Syndrome
0.82% Cornelia De Lange Syndrome
0.55% Fragile X Syndrome
0.55% Cri Du Chat Syndrome
0.55% Deaf/Blind
40.22% Cerebral Palsy
23.41% Hearing Impaired
15.97% Downs Syndrome
8.53% Vision Impaired
5.78% Microcephaly
1.10% Williams Syndrome
1.10% Angelman Syndrome
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0.82% Cornelia De Lange Syndrome
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Disability profile of children registered with Better Start in the year

This picture embodies how my son has taught me to live my role as his carer, with eyes closed tight, smile on our faces, as the waves wash over us. Then laughing as we find the joy in getting back up and doing it all again.

Natasa Kalocsai

Photography: Natasa Kalocsai

Empowering carers

Counselling Service
The Counselling Service provided 4,588 counselling sessions to 1,238 carers during the year.

Specialist Mental Health Counselling Service
Operating through the Brisbane North and the Brisbane South offices, our Mental Health Counselling Service supported over 200 carers of people with mental health problems, autism or intellectual disability this year.

Carer Advisory Service
The first port of call for many carers seeking information, advice and emotional support, Carer Advisory Service assisted 5,560 callers during the year, a 1.60% increase on the previous year.

Carer Liaison and Support
This year we provided over 40,000 hours of support and assistance to 721 carers, including providing advice and direction on specific issues; liaising with other agencies; and assisting carers to access other services.

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Natasa Kalocsai
Inclusion

Care Support Groups
All our regional offices run regular carer support groups throughout the year. These groups enable carers to share information and advice, offer emotional support, learn new skills and have a break from caring. During the year over 15,500 carers attended one of our support groups.

Friends Care Online
We created ‘Friends Care Online’, a closed Facebook group for carers, because we recognised that many carers feel isolated due to their caring role. This year, ‘Friends Care Online’ has grown from strength to strength. We’re seeing regular, supportive discussions between carers about all manner of carer issues, and we pleased to note that the group membership increased by 30% in the past 12 months to 366 carers.

Education and Training
As a registered training organisation, we are pleased that 84 carers enrolled to study their Certificate III in Community Services with us this year and will be gaining their qualification soon. Not only that, but 100% of the carers who enrolled in our Certificate III in Aged Care course graduated and secured employment in the Aged Care sector.

Caring for her elderly grandmother was an easy decision for Rhonnie Tant. Rhonnie cared for her grandmother for 12 years, “but I’d never thought of what I’d actually gained from caring for my grandmother. It was only after she was gone, when I felt a real void in my life, that I occurred to me how fortunate my grandmother had been to be able to stay in her own home as she got older. It occurred to me that a lot of people don’t have someone at home to care for them.”

Rhonnie studied for her Certificate III in Aged Care qualification with Carer Queensland. Her skills were soon recognised by a local aged care employer – she was hired in the middle of her work placement halfway through her course. She now has a permanent part time role.

“Although caring for her brother is a big part of her life, Maree doesn’t really mention it to other people. “I don’t really talk to my friends about caring for Joseph. Only some of my friends know what I do, really,” she says. “Those who do know about it think I’ve got a good handle on it.”

Maree beat off 800 applicants to secure her bursary of $4,000. She plans on using the money wisely. “I get $1,000 a term, so the first thing I will buy is a laptop. I don’t have a laptop at the moment, so I have to use the school’s when I have to write up assignments. I enjoy school – maths, arts, and science. I can’t pick a favourite subject really.”

Carers Queensland Inc - Annual Report 2014/15
Disability profile of children registered with Better Start in the year

Vehicle repairs 18.24%
Other household appliances 15.32%
Household furniture 1.92%
Refrigerators 10.46%
Washing machines 9.48%
Computers and accessories 9.00%
Vehicle registration 8.75%
Other 7.29%
Health items (equipment or procedures) 6.08%
Household repairs and maintenance 3.40%

LGBTI carers
Many carers who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex do not identify as a carer or seek help and support with their caring role. We need to do more to raise awareness of our services amongst these carers. This year, Carers Queensland, in partnership with the other state and territory carer associations, attended the Sydney Mardi Gras 2015 Fair Day, promoting the carer network and carer support services to the 70,000 attendees.

Reconciliation Action Plan
Carers Queensland recognises the challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and is committed to a vision of a reconciled Australia. Following the launch of our Reconciliation Action Plan last year, we are pleased to report: An increase in the number of carers who use our services
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander carers rose by 34.48%
Aboriginal carers rose by 6.17%
 Torres Strait Islander carers rose by 84.61%

84% of our employees have participated in Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island peoples cultural awareness training.

We launched an Education and Training Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, an Employment Strategy and a Procurement Strategy to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.

No Interest Loans Scheme NILS®
The No Interest Loans Scheme or NILS® provides small interest free loans for those eligible carers who are wholly or partially excluded from mainstream financial services. For many carers securing a NILS® loan is the difference between being able to purchase a vital service or piece of equipment and struggling without.

What Carers Purchased with their NILS® loan
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander carers rose by 34.48%
Aboriginal carers rose by 6.17%\n Torres Strait Islander carers rose by 84.61%

We received 373 enquiries and approved 295 loans to a value of $299,600

NILS has assisted me in my ongoing (at times overwhelming) caring role, on multiple occasions. I have repaid three NILS® loans and am close to repaying my fourth. My loans have been for medical equipment needs, eyeglasses and new whitegoods that I simply would not have been able to afford to purchase outright at the time. I provide full-time special care for one of my children. The much appreciated help I have received from NILS has contributed greatly to my ability to "keep it together" as I balance not only appointments, travel, general parenting responsibilities and life in general, but also my available finances, as well as my own physical, mental and emotional needs. I truly am grateful for the help NILS has afforded me.

Beth Cavallari

Photography: Beth Cavallari

Carers Queensland Inc - Annual Report 2014/15

Introducing my mum and dad, aged 86, married for 63 years. Both frail aged, mum with Alzheimer’s Disease. Mum and dad love living (semi-independently) on their property. I do whatever is necessary to ensure they can live there happily and safely. My role contributes to their continued joy of life.

Beth Cavallari
Behind the scenes

NDIS Participant Readiness Scheme
Our NDIS Participant Readiness Team has been busy helping older carers and service providers to prepare for the Queensland launch of the NDIS in 2016. Almost 200 carers have attended our NDIS Participant Readiness workshops to date with many attendees feeling significantly more prepared for the NDIS following the workshop.

My mum attended yesterday’s workshop. My workshop was so much more than just putting together and delivering an informative and engaging workshop. You have provided people like my mother with some peace of mind. That, to me, is a priceless gift.

Kate is the mother of 22 year old James, who has a genetic disorder known as MECP2 Duplication Syndrome. James lives in the family home, and has recently chosen to receive personalised funding through the Your Life Your Choice model.

“Prior to this, all we purchased for James were in-home or community access support hours as dictated by Disability Guidelines. Under the Your Life Your Choice model we have been able to provide very specific supports for James, which are also very flexible. We have purchased equipment for him; personal care products; medically approved nutrition; given him more independence and comfort with his transport; introduced personal care shifts in his support shifts; and retained flexible in home and community access support hours.

“Your Life Your Choice has really had a positive impact on the quality of James’ life. We chose Carers Queensland as our Your Life Your Choice Host Provider for two reasons. Firstly, they use PATH Planning to develop the support plan. We understood this process so was comfortable with it. Secondly, because James has profound disability, he relies very heavily on us, as his carers, to make decisions that are in his best interests. We felt that Carers Queensland had a grasp on this process from both his, and our, perspective. Indeed, our relationship with Carers Queensland has been a huge help throughout the process of setting up your Life Your Choice for our family. I believe our transition was as easy as it was because of the communication and respect we received from Carers Queensland.

“Your Life Your Choice has made a huge difference in our ability to plan and manage your Life’s funding to suit his changing needs. We have experienced a huge increase in his independence and quality of life. We chose to take on some of the responsibility for managing James’ funding to see whether it was going to work for us. I felt that easing in was less stressful, and it gave me the opportunity to grow with it in good time, learning along the way.

“Your Life Your Choice has really had a positive impact on the quality of James’ life. We can now choose how to use his funding to address his changing needs. We chose Carers Queensland as our Your Life Your Choice Host Provider for two reasons. Firstly, they use PATH Planning to develop the support plan. We understood this process so was comfortable with it. Secondly, because James has profound disability, he relies very heavily on us, as his carers, to make decisions that are in his best interests. We felt that Carers Queensland had a grasp on this process from both his, and our, perspective. Indeed, our relationship with Carers Queensland has been a huge help throughout the process of setting up your Life Your Choice for our family. I believe our transition was as easy as it was because of the communication and respect we received from Carers Queensland.
Financial performance overview


The major sources of recurrent funding during the year were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HACC Carer Liaison and Support – State &amp; Federal</td>
<td>$3,441,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSS Carers Information Support Services</td>
<td>$576,496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSS National Carers Counselling Program</td>
<td>$1,113,076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSS Young Carer Program</td>
<td>$409,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPITAF Family Support and Advocacy Program</td>
<td>$237,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MACC Multicultural Advocacy Service – State &amp; Federal</td>
<td>$1,912,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSS Mental Health Program</td>
<td>$14,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSS Better Start Program</td>
<td>$427,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$7,895,054</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The major sources of additional one-off funding during the year were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DSS Mental Health Program (Surplus 13-14)</td>
<td>$26,751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSS Better Start Program (Surplus 13-14)</td>
<td>$97,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities</td>
<td>$323,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETE Community Learning Program</td>
<td>$791,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$548,703</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We would like to publicly acknowledge the on-going support received from the following funding bodies.

- DSS Department of Social Services
- LPITAF Legal Practitioner Interest on Trust Accounts Fund
- Communities Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
- DETE Department of Education, Training and Employment

The above funds were utilised mainly in the payment of salaries and associated costs (71%) in supporting unpaid carers in Queensland in their caring role through the provision of information and support, community development, education & training, advocacy and counselling.
Dad teaches me about gardening and growing. One of the best parts of my care’s role is learning from my parents. I had to stop trying to take over, and instead, provide support which allows my parents to continue to work on their own activities for themselves.

Beth Cavallari
For information, advice, carer support and access to counselling, advocacy and other services, contact the Carer Advisory Service 1800 242 636 (free call except from mobiles)