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Budget delivers some certainty for carers

Carers NSW welcomes the additional support outlined for carers in the Federal Budget.

Under new legislation, an annual supplementary payment of \$600 will be paid to those receiving the Carer Payment, with an additional \$600 per annum for Carer Allowance recipients for each eligible person in their care. Carers receiving both the Carer Payment and Carer Allowance will receive at least two payments every year. The supplementary payment replaces the one-off bonuses.

“It is a good thing that the Government is providing certainty for carers by making the supplementary payments ongoing,” said Elena Katrakis, CEO of Carers NSW. “This gives carers the opportunity to plan their finances more easily.”

In addition, Carer Payment recipients will receive the boost to the base pension rate. This means singles will receive an extra \$32.49 a week on the full rate of pension, and \$10.14 a week more for couples.

Another welcome announcement is that the Government will remove the barriers around Special Disability Trusts, which currently prevent families from making financial contributions to the care and accommodation needs of a family member with severe disability.

“This is an important step that will encourage more families to apply for Special Disability Trusts and better ensure the financial future for those they care for,” said Ms Katrakis.

In addition, the Government has brought in a range of other supports for people with disabilities and their carers, including \$9.3 million over four years for an additional 250 outside school hours care places for teenagers with disability; \$6.8 million for a pilot program trialling incentives to provide more jobs to people with disability; \$3 million to the introduction of a new national disability parking permit scheme and \$1.8 million for a national Companion Card scheme for people with disability and their carers.

“The streamlining of services and support for people with disability and their carers across the country is a positive step. National criteria for things such as the Companion Card, which some states don’t currently have, is a good outcome,” said Ms Katrakis.

“Overall the Budget has delivered some welcome support for carers. However, as outlined in the *Who Cares...?* Report recommendations, there are still further measures that need to be investigated by the Government.”

Media Contact: Nina Olle, 02 9280 4744 or 0400 061 100