



# **Demographic pressures on the supply of family and friend carers in Australia: turning challenges into opportunities**

Carers Australia presentation to the 6<sup>th</sup> International Carers Conference

# About Carers Australia

Carers Australia is the national peak body representing the diversity of Australians who provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends with a:

- disability
- chronic condition
- mental illness or disorder
- drug or alcohol problem
- terminal illness
- or who are frail aged

# The Carers Australia network

- Our State and Territory Associations operate in all states (6) and territories (2). Services are provided in 17 urban areas; 14 rural areas; and 4 remote areas.
- Services offered by State and Territory Associations include:
  - contact centres for carers
  - assessments of needs
  - information about the entitlements of carers
  - referral to the types of services which can assist them in their locality
  - providing or organising respite
  - carer training
  - counselling
  - support groups
- Our Associations also undertake promotional activities and policy advocacy.

# Australia has historically faced demographic challenges in relation to the supply of carers

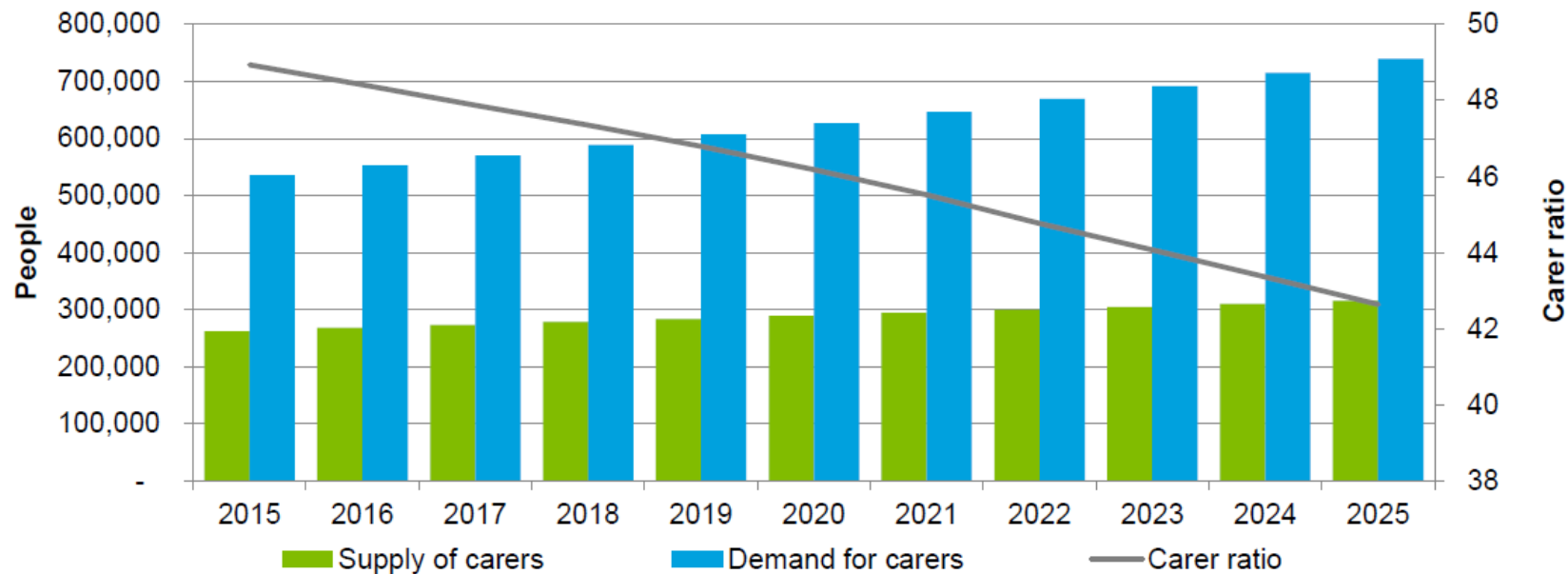
## Reasons:

- Size combined with highly dispersed population across vast distances
- Very high levels of family mobility



# However, like many other countries, we are facing new demographic challenges

## Australia: Projected demand and supply of family and friend carers to 2025



Source: Deloitte Access Economics calculations.

# There is an upside for carers

- Historically governments have understood the need to support carers from a moral perspective.
- However, never before have they been so aware of the economic value of carers in terms of:
  - The commitment to continue to provide carers with relatively high levels of income support
  - The replacement cost of informal care in the face of rising demand for care
  - The affordability of major reforms to the aged and disability sectors

# The consequences of the National Disability Insurance Scheme for carers

- In July 2013 the National Disability Insurance Scheme to support people with severe and profound disabilities commenced
- Intended to be rolled out across Australia by 2019 years at a cost of \$22 billion per year when fully rolled out.
- Confusion over supports for carers available under the scheme

“The NDIS also seeks to nurture and support carers and families in their roles as part of ensuring that the Scheme is sustainable”

Chair of the National Disability Insurance Agency, Bruce Bonyhady

# The consequences of aged care reform for carers

- Nearly all aged care services have become the responsibility of the national government
- Strong focus on aged people living independently at home
- Strong focus on consumer choice and control of range of services

But has highlighted some downsides for carer supports:

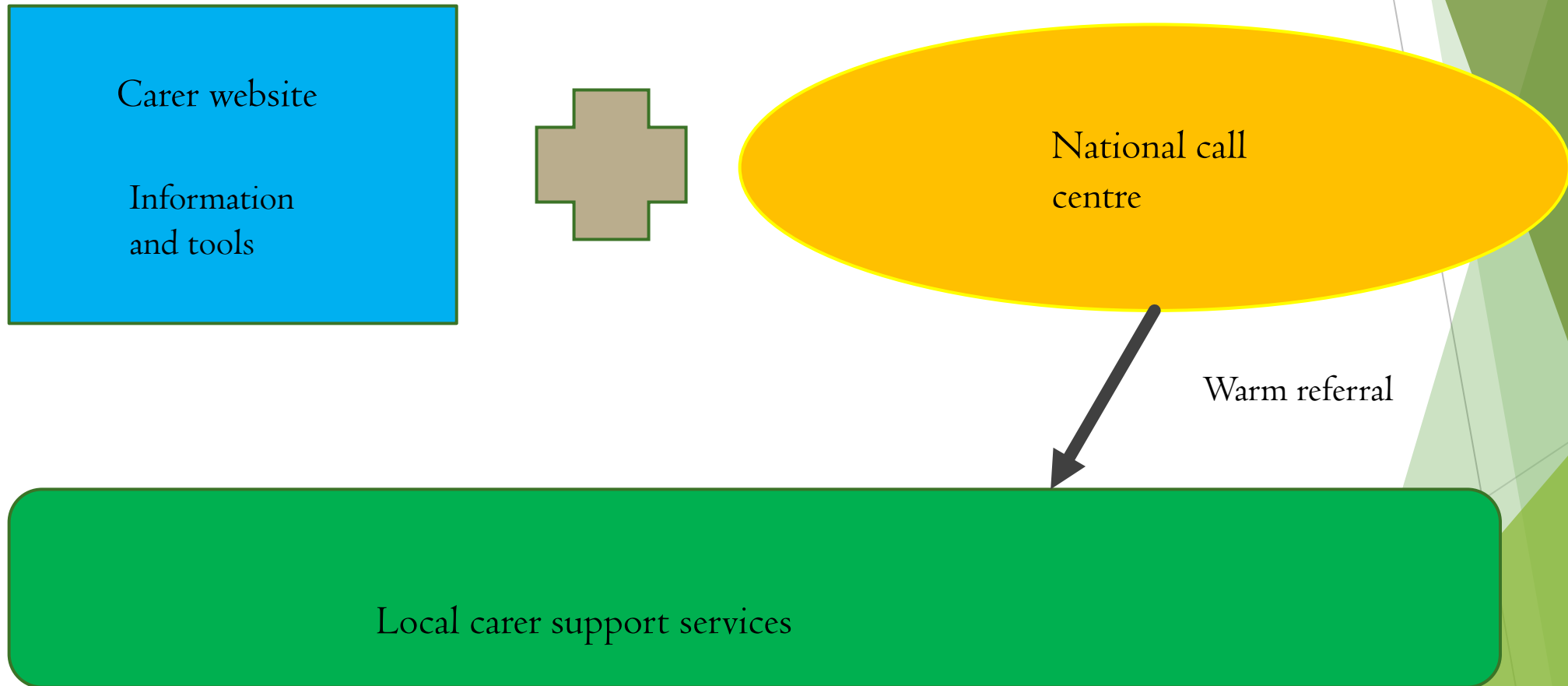
- Some funded programme supports previously available solely for carers have been redirected to care recipient supports
- Under Consumer Directed Care (CDC) carer support is a by-product of the consumer's (i.e., care recipient's) package
- Carers of people both under and over age 65 have to negotiate supports through different systems



# Government response to fractured supports for carers

- Recognition that carers have their own needs and must be able to access supports in their own right
- Recognition that carers find it difficult to navigate and use services based on the age and condition of care recipients
- Creation of a new Carers Gateway
- Creation of an Integrated Carer Support Program

# The Carer Gateway (work in progress)

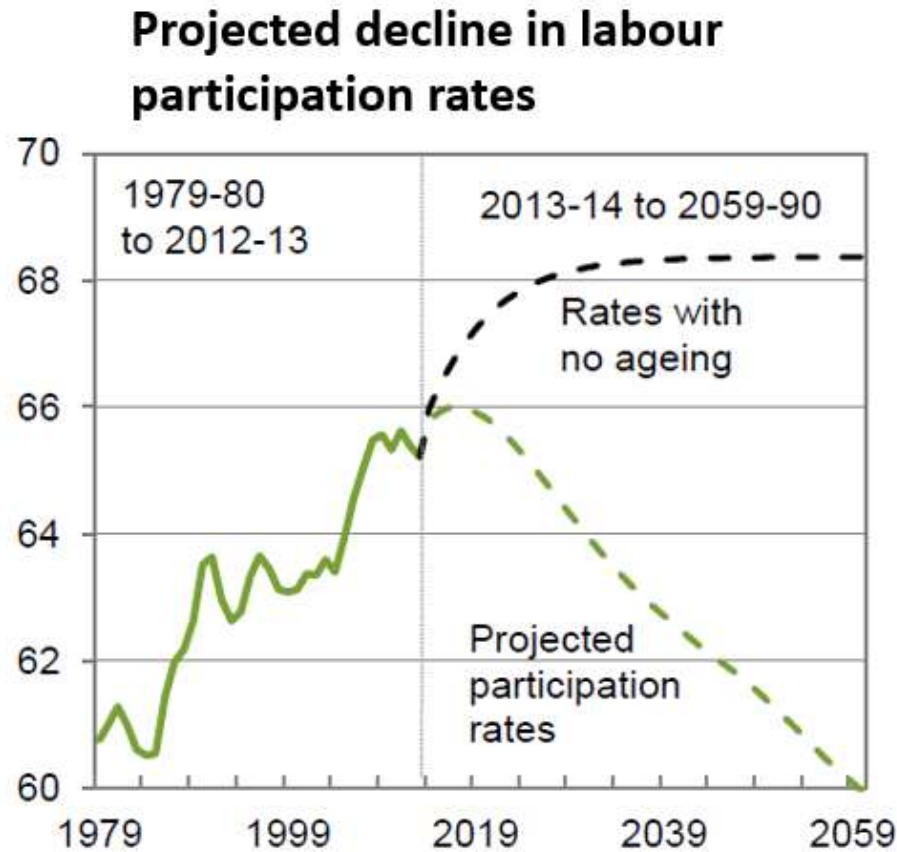


# Integrated Carer Supports (work in progress)

## Principles:

- Support services to be available to carers regardless of the age or condition of who they care for
- Nationally consistent access to services
- Easy, unfragmented access to a range of supports carers need

# Support for employment conditions which will facilitate combining work and care



Productivity Commission: *An Ageing Australia: Preparing for the Future*, 2013

# Future shortage of family and friend carers will remain a problem

- None of the initiatives described will solve the problem of a shortage of family and friend carers into the future
- More investment will be required to provide sufficient paid care supports
- However governments also will need to invest much more in supports for carers to contain costs