

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

Minister for Ambulance Services



Thursday, 7 December 2023

CARING FOR THE CARERS OF PEOPLE WITH CANCER

The Allan Labor Government is investing in new research to examine the needs of carers of people diagnosed with cancer in a bid to help this largely invisible and informal workforce.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas this week officially launched Deakin University's new Carer Hub – part of the university's newly established Centre of Excellence in Cancer Carer Research, Translation & Impact.

There are more than 2.6 million unpaid carers in Australia, and it is estimated carers bear 60 per cent of the financial cost of cancer.

Backed by a \$1.2 million investment by the Labor Government, the aim of the Carer Hub is to listen to carers and identify ways to improve their health and the way they interact with the Victorian health system.

Carers face many barriers to accessing timely healthcare, often because their caring responsibilities mean they don't have time to address their own healthcare needs. They also report challenges associated with their caregiving roles, including a lack of training, feeling undervalued in the care team, and economic and personal health concerns.

These are just some of the issues the Carer Hub seeks to examine through its research into the unmet needs of carers who are supporting people living with cancer.

It will also address inequalities in healthcare by supporting carers from priority carer populations, including carers within LGBTIQ+ communities, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, and carers living in regional and rural communities.

In addition to the new hub, the Labor Government is supporting several initiatives for carers of people with cancer including an online portal to improve carer health and wellbeing, guidelines for young carers and resources for family carers.

The Carer Hub aligns with the *Victorian cancer plan 2020-2024*, which is improving health equity across the cancer system. The plan aims to halve the number of Victorians diagnosed with potentially preventable cancers, increase survival rates and provide the best possible experience of the cancer treatment system.

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"Carers are the unsung heroes of our community but there's limited understanding of exactly what it's like to be a carer of someone diagnosed with cancer – so we're changing that through the Carer Hub."

Quote attributable to Member for Box Hill Paul Hamer

"Caring for a loved one living with cancer can be a challenging job both physically and mentally – it is vital we make sure carers are well supported to continue their work without fear of burnout or social isolation."

Quote attributable to Member for Ashwood Matt Fregon

"This research hub is going to make a real difference for carers right across Victoria, ensuring their voices and needs are heard and addressed."

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