

Support for Young Carers

Young carers, those aged up to 25, play a vital role in supporting family members or friends facing various challenges such as disabilities, mental health issues, chronic conditions, substance dependence, or frailty. With more than 235,000 young carers in Australia, it is crucial to acknowledge their invaluable contributions.

However, it is equally important to recognise that a lack of adequate support can adversely impact their well-being, education, employment prospects, and social lives.

Take Cheryl, a remarkable 9-year-old, for example. She cares for her mother, who battles anxiety, and her grandparents, both of whom have dementia. Cheryl takes on household chores, meal preparation, and helps her grandparents with mobility. Despite the challenges, Cheryl finds fulfilment in assisting her loved ones. She shared her experiences, expressing gratitude for the Carer Gateway program, which has brought happiness, friendship, and support into her life.

Similarly, 15-year-old Ben assumes a crucial care-giving role for his older brother, who has an intellectual disability. This responsibility has impacted his academic performance and social life. Fortunately, Ben found support through the young carers program offered by the Carer Gateway, leading to improved school performance and enhanced social opportunities.

Your Side, as a Carer Gateway service provider, plays a pivotal role in helping young carers achieve their goals. They offer tutoring to establish good study habits, arrange respite for young carers, organise counselling and peer support sessions, explore upskilling and employment pathways, and even assist with

driving lessons.

James O'Keefe, Young Carer Consultant at Carer Gateway, emphasises that the young carers program is designed to relieve pressures at school, alleviate stress at home, and facilitate young carers in finding employment while also being enjoyable.

For more information or to access these services, **visit www.carergateway.gov.au or call 1800 422 737**, Monday to Friday between 8am and 6pm local time.

Young carers deserve our support, and the Carer Gateway is here to provide it.

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