

The tyranny of distance? Carers in regional and remote areas of Australia

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Mary Reid is currently Acting CEO of Carers Australia. She has been with the organisation for more than 8 years, having established the National Carer Counselling Program in 2003 and more recently she has been Business Manager, responsible for financial management, contract administration, HR policies and stakeholder management for the organisation. Carers Australia, as the national peak body, works in close collaboration with the eight state and territory carer associations, who keep us informed of carer specific issues and provide access to the diversity of carers and caring situations.

Unpaid family carers often discuss the additional challenges of providing care in a remote location to a person with a disability, mental illness, terminal illness, chronic condition, or who is frail aged.

Now for the first time, data supporting their experience is provided in the report *The Tyranny of Distance? Carers in rural and remote areas of Australia*. The research examines the situation of carers outside of capital cities and the challenges they face in comparison to their urban counterparts.

This presentation outlines findings of the research that maps the geographic spread of family carers across the nation and reveals some of the key demographic features of this group. Key findings include the distribution of carers across Australia, impacts of remoteness on carer health and wellbeing, the location and profile of Indigenous carers, age profile of carers by location, access to services and the impact of drought.

The research clearly indicates the need for targeted policy and services to support family carers in these regions such as: improved respite, carer health checks and specific training, as well as measures to address the high rates of caring among Indigenous Australians nationally.