

COMMONWEALTH  
Respite &  
Carelink Centre

*Supporting Carers  
Informing the Community*  
SOUTHERN REGION

# Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre Southern Region



## A Service for Carers

Urgent Respite (24 Hours)  
Carelink Information Service (Business Hours)  
Carer Support

**AlfredHealth**

# Overview

The Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre Southern Region is part of Alfred Health. We provide practical and emotional support for carers throughout the south eastern suburbs of Melbourne and the Mornington Peninsula.

We also work with various community services to help them support carers.

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres operate Australia-wide. This brochure provides information on services and what you can expect from us.

The first step is to phone us. We can help you meet immediate needs and provide connections to services which can support your ongoing circumstances.



*The evenings could be difficult, (10 year old) James finds it hard to settle and just being able to phone and speak to someone was great.*

*They also helped me find a school holiday program for children with high support needs and we use it regularly. It gives us both a break.*

## Who do we support?

We support carers. A carer is a person who provides unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, dementia or who is frail aged. This support enables the person to continue living at home. Carers come from all walks of life, from different ethnic backgrounds and are all ages.

Carers may care for a few hours a week or all day every day. Some carers are eligible for government benefits. Other carers are employed or have a private income.

Caring for others can be complex and demanding and a carer may require assistance and support in a range of ways to ensure their own health and wellbeing.

- » *Mum is quite frail. When dad went to hospital, we had to organise some support for mum very quickly. The CareLine people were wonderful on the phone. When dad came out of hospital, he was referred to a carer support professional and they helped him sort things out. Now, both he and mum get some help and a break from time to time.*
- » *My son has autism with global developmental delay. When we moved here from Queensland I didn't know where to start with finding local services. The Carelink person on the phone had it all at her fingertips. It would have taken me hours to get all that information together.*
- » *I am a doctor on the Peninsula and I sometimes have carers in my surgery who are tired and need a break. It is good to be able to phone and get some information or a referral on their behalf.*

## Phone us

Phones are staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for carers needing information, support and short term, urgent respite.

During business hours, individuals and professionals can phone for general information on a broad range of services related to caring and supporting people at home. All our services can be accessed via one central phone number.

**FREECALL \* 1800 052 222**

- 1. CareLine**  
(Urgent respite coordination, 24 hour phone service)
- 2. Carelink**  
(Phone information service, 9.00am – 5.00pm weekdays)
- 3. Carer Support**  
(Short term, face-to-face respite planning and support for carers)

\* (Calls from mobile phones are charged at applicable rates)

We provide services to the Southern Metropolitan Region – the cities of Port Phillip, Stonnington, Glen Eira, Bayside, Kingston, Greater Dandenong, Casey, Frankston, Cardinia Shire and the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

# Caring for carers

The role of a carer can be physically and emotionally exhausting. Regular breaks from caring can help to relieve this. A break can also benefit the person being cared for. They can offer new experiences and something to look forward to. They provide an opportunity for some independence and recreation. These breaks are often called respite and we can help you arrange them.

## Carer support

Carer support professionals can assist you to find the balance between caring for yourself and caring for others. Caring for someone at home can be complex and demanding. Our staff understand particular caring situations. They understand cultural needs and the challenges carers face. They are qualified health professionals (social work, aged care, psychology and allied health) who can arrange to meet you to talk things through. They know that everyone's situation is different. They may help you to plan respite and to communicate with other services. They may have suggestions for your own wellbeing. Simply talking with someone about your situation can be helpful. There are various services available for people in different types of care situations.

### Aged

This service provides short term support and assistance to carers of older and frail people. Professional staff can help you decide what you might need now and also in the future. We can explain how the system works and introduce you to services.

- » *My husband Jim is confined to bed since his stroke and the carer support worker has helped me get things organised. I couldn't have done it without her.*
- » *I coped for so long on my own. Eventually it wore me down and I asked for help. I knew what I should have been doing but I just needed someone to hold my hand and show me the way.*

### Residential Respite Options

This service assists carers of older and frail people to plan for and use overnight, out-of-home respite in community or residential settings. We can explain the respite system, assist with bookings and help you with practical arrangements to ease the transition between home and respite.

- » *Eventually mum may need to move to a home but for now it is good for her to just stay overnight occasionally to give us all a break. There are a few things to get used to, so it is good to take things slowly.*

### Flexible Respite

This service offers regular and occasional breaks to assist carers to support older and frail people and those who have dementia.

Some options may be in partnership with other agencies and are more ongoing and/or activities based. A focus on providing activities for the person being cared for ultimately supports the carer.

- » *My wife has dementia and goes to The Weekenders each Saturday in South Melbourne. This enables me to catch up with friends or do the things which are hard to get to during the week.*

### Dementia & Behaviour

This service has a specific focus on dementia and the changed behaviours associated with it such as restlessness, wandering and aggression. We can assist you to better manage the changes and introduce you to supports such as respite care, workshops and carer support groups.

- » *I couldn't understand why she wouldn't get in the shower and it was becoming a real battle. Now I know more about dementia and behaviour, I do some things differently. Life is more enjoyable now.*

# Ways to take a break

Breaks may happen in your house or away from it. They might be for a few hours, a day, overnight or longer. You could use the time to go to an exercise class, attend a wedding, catch up with friends or family or go on holidays. You could plan an occasional longer break or have short breaks regularly.

- » *I was able to arrange for a respite worker to stay with my son at our place while I went to Sydney for a friend's wedding.*
- » *A person comes over every second Wednesday and looks after mum while I go out and catch up on all my errands.*

# Organising a break

Phone us for a confidential discussion. We are experienced in finding respite options for people of all ages and conditions. This can include emergency respite outside standard business hours. It might also include carer support groups, day programs and outings.

# Do carers need a referral?

Carers enter our service in a range of ways. They may give consent to being referred from a local council, community service or their doctor. Carers may hear about us at a social gathering, from an ad in the paper or from a friend or relative. To understand our full range of services, all individuals including health professionals are encouraged to call us or have a look at our website in the first instance. We can answer questions, help carers meet immediate needs and provide connections to services which can support ongoing circumstances.

## Disability

This service provides support and assistance to carers of people with a disability who are under 65.

It caters for all disabilities including autism spectrum disorders.

We can assist by helping to access existing respite and support options. Key focus areas are respite, support and recreation.

- » *The challenge of caring for a person with disabilities changes as they age – and we age! The people I have met really understand this.*
- » *My daughter is a single mum and has to work so I look after Jayden who has cerebral palsy. It's been a bit easier since I got involved with the grandparents carer support group.*

## Mental Health

This service provides short term support and assistance to carers of people with a severe mental illness. Staff can provide referral and links to the mental health and community service systems.

This program also has a service development focus which seeks to identify gaps in services for carers and develops ways to address these.

- » *I learnt a lot about looking after myself. I was drained from the constant ups and downs. I feel as though I am coping much better now than I did before.*
- » *I have been on a weekend retreat with other carers and it helped me to put things in perspective.*

## Young Carers

This service assists young carers who need support to complete their secondary education or vocational equivalent due to the demands of their caring role. There are two components:

Respite Services: enables those carers who are school aged to access respite and age appropriate support, including educational, social and recreational activities.

Information Services: young carers up to 25 can access information, advice and referral services, including referral to counselling.

- » *My mum has MS and needs my help around the house quite a bit. It is great having a tutor come in at times to help me with my school work. It stops me from falling behind.*



*When John was first diagnosed with dementia we managed quite well. Eventually though he became very restless, wouldn't get dressed, that sort of thing.*

*He had been assessed and we were using occasional respite but then my Carer Support Worker suggested I try attending a workshop called **Creative Ways to Care - strategies for carers of people living with dementia**.*

*It was just so valuable. I learnt some great strategies that help me to smooth out the ups and downs. It has been a much happier household lately.*

*I don't know how I would have coped otherwise.*

## Online information

Information and resources are available on our websites:

**www.carersouth.org.au** caters for all carers, GPs and service providers and has community news and events, education and training, links to community services, publications and carer support group listings. Subscribe free to Carer South News quarterly newsletter.

**www.respitesouth.org.au** caters for carers, people with a disability and service providers seeking information and news and events about a wide variety of disability respite options. These include recreation and social activities available in the Southern Region. Subscribe free to receive weekly updates online.

**www.respiteseeker.com.au** is a directory to respite services and vacancies for carers of older people in the Southern Region and elsewhere in Victoria.

## Carer education

We offer education and training for new carers and for those who have been caring for a while. We strive to make sessions welcoming, informative and supportive. Facilitators are qualified professionals with extensive knowledge and experience in working with individuals, families and larger groups. A full range of workshops is featured on our website [www.carersouth.org.au](http://www.carersouth.org.au).

## Peer support

Sometimes the best support for carers is to meet and chat with other carers. Our service can introduce you to a range of activities where you can relax in the company of other carers.

These may include outings for both yourself and the person you care for. We may recommend a carer support group close to where you live.

- » *I didn't think there would be anything for men so I was really happy to find out about the BBQ Boys male carer support group.*
- » *Christine and I met at a lunch organised by the Support for Older Carers Program and we catch up from time to time. She has a daughter with disabilities too. We don't always talk about our girls but if we want to we can.*
- » *I recently went on a retreat to Point Lonsdale with the Working Carers Choices Program. I don't like leaving mum since she had her stroke but knowing she was being well cared for made the weekend all the more terrific. It was nice to have something to look forward to.*

## We work with you

There is a lot more information for carers available on a range of topics. The important thing to remember is that you have choices.

Some decisions you make as a carer may not be easy, but you shouldn't feel out of control or pressured. We can help you explore your options.

## What if I have special needs because of my language or culture?

We support carers from a variety of backgrounds. We can organise an interpreter to speak with you by telephone or face-to-face. Many of our resources are available in languages other than English. We can connect you to different cultural carer support groups in the community.

## What is advocacy?

Assisting someone to stand up for their rights is often called advocacy.

An example is; if you feel unable to ask for support or make a complaint yourself, an advocate may be able to help you. An advocate can be a friend, relative or an independent organisation. Please speak to us about any requirement you may have for advocacy.

## Confidentiality

In accordance with Federal and Victorian Government policy and legislation, the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre Southern Region protects the privacy of personal and health information it holds and uses it only for the purposes intended. Information supplied about yourself and the person you care for is treated as confidential and will only be disclosed with your approval as necessary for further consultation or provision of services.

## Can I complain about services if I'm not happy?

It's not easy to complain but complaints can actually improve services for all. All comments are valuable and your feedback is important. Even if a service is free or there is only a small fee, you still have the right to complain.

If you have any concerns at all, please tell the staff directly involved with you.

If you are unsatisfied with the response, please telephone 9076 6111 and ask to speak with the Program Manager of the service provided to you.

You can also write to us confidentially at:  
Feedback

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink  
Centre Southern Region  
260 Kooyong Road  
Caulfield Vic 3162

Or [carerfeedback@alfred.org.au](mailto:carerfeedback@alfred.org.au)

If your complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may choose to speak to the Alfred Health Liaison Officer on 9076 6127.

## Contact the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre Southern Region

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Interpreter services are available upon request or call

**Telephone Interpreter Service 131 450**

A phone solution for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impediment

**National Relay Service 1800 555 660**



## Our locations

### Administration & Phone Services

Caulfield Hospital  
260 Kooyong Road  
Caulfield 3162  
F: 9076 6139

**Carer Support**  
Caulfield Hospital  
240 Kooyong Road  
Caulfield 3162  
F: 9076 4055

**Carer Support**  
51 Playne Street  
Frankston 3199  
F: 8781 3420

**Carer Support**  
Suite 3, 31 Princes  
Highway  
Dandenong 3175  
F: 9212 3030

**Carer Support**  
Sandringham Hospital  
193 Bluff Road  
Sandringham 3191  
F: 9076 1610

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