

# It's time to value care



**WOMEN'S HEALTH  
& WELLBEING**  
Barwon South West

## Fact Sheet:

### Unpaid care means many things

Unpaid care work includes all forms of domestic work, such as cooking, cleaning, washing, gardening and home maintenance. It also includes taking care of children, the elderly or a family member as well as voluntary community work.



#### Unpaid Care is Important

Unpaid care work is essential to the social and economic wellbeing of individuals, families and societies

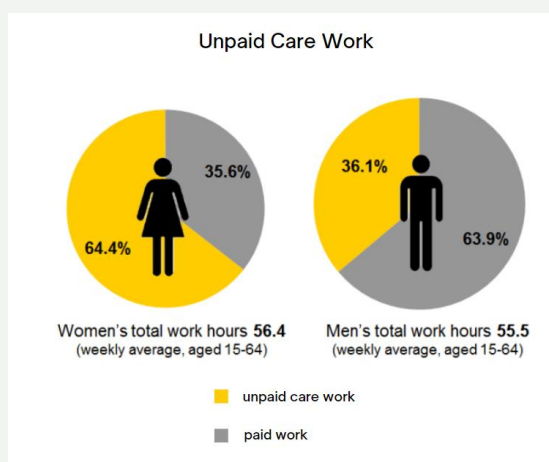
Unpaid care contributes to economic activity of individuals, families, society and the country as a whole.

The monetary value of unpaid care work in Australia has been estimated to be \$650.1 billion, the equivalent to 50.6% of GDP.6 However, unpaid care work is not included in the calculation of the GDP.

#### Unpaid Care is a gendered issue and disproportionately falls on the shoulders of women:

Women made up the majority of carers, representing 70 per cent of primary carers and 56 per cent of carers overall.

Women comprised 92 per cent of primary carers for children with disabilities, 70 per cent of primary carers for parents and 52 per cent of primary carers for partners. While 57.5 per cent of mothers whose youngest child is aged 0–5 years were participating in the labour force, 94 per cent of fathers, whose youngest child is 0–5 years, were working or looking for work



**71% of Victorian carers are women.**

<https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/australian-unpaid-care-work-and-the-labour-market.pdf>

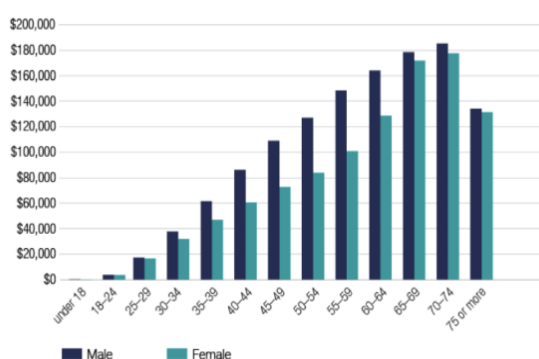
## Parental Leave and Superannuation

Just one in 20 Australian fathers take primary parental leave. 95% of all primary carer leave is taken by mothers and this is low compared to global standards.

These gender discrepancies correlate with long term economic burden for women including accruing considerably less superannuation and facing housing and financial insecurity in later life.

In 2011–12, the average superannuation balance at retirement was \$105,000 for women and \$197,000 for men, resulting in a gender retirement superannuation gap of 46.6 per cent.

Chart 12: Individuals – median super balance, by age and sex, 2017–18 financial year



This data only includes individuals with an account balance greater than zero.

Age discrimination (although illegal since the introduction of the Age Discrimination Act 2004) impacts the ability of many older women to accumulate superannuation in later life.

**‘Older women are the fastest growing cohort of people facing homelessness’**  
(humanrights.gov.au)

## Contact

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## Unpaid care needs to be valued

**Society relies on the unpaid care performed by women.**

Undervaluing of women’s unpaid care work is linked to women’s poorer health and wellbeing outcomes and financial insecurity for carers and limits women’s participation in the paid workforce.

Improving the suitability of, and confidence in, social supports and services for people who require care would improve the circumstances, health and wellbeing of women in unpaid care roles.

It is important to transform gendered norms so that unpaid care work is shared more equitably between women and men.

<https://whv.org.au/resources/whv-publications/spotlight-women-and-unpaid-care>

This may include workplaces offering and promoting flexible working arrangements to *all* staff members regardless of gender, paid superannuation whilst on paid parental leave and legislative change allowing parents greater flexibility on how they access paid parental leave.



## Resources:

<https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/australian-unpaid-care-work-and-the-labour-market.pdf>

<https://www.aph.gov.au/>

<https://aifs.gov.au/>

<https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/australian-unpaid-care-work-and-the-labour-market.pdf>

[Wgea.gov.au](http://Wgea.gov.au)

<https://whv.org.au/resources/whv-publications/spotlight-women-and-unpaid-care>

