

# Our experiences as Aboriginal carers

Findings from a 'yarning circle'  
held in  
Port Augusta  
2015

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- Carers SA
- Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC), UNSW Australia

December 2016  
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# Carers and Social Inclusion

## Background information

Stressful situations can affect the health and well-being of carers (e.g. physical health, mental health), which in turn can affect their ability to provide care. Carers may also experience social isolation, which can further impact their health and well-being.

The Australian Government's *Carer and Social Inclusion: New Framework, Evidence and Policy* (2018) provides a national framework for carer and social inclusion. The framework is based on the principle that carers should be supported to provide care and to live their lives. The framework is based on the principle that carers should be supported to provide care and to live their lives. The framework is based on the principle that carers should be supported to provide care and to live their lives.

## The project aims

- to identify the needs of carers in the community.
  - to develop a program of support for carers in the community.
  - to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in supporting carers in the community.
  - to disseminate the findings of the program to other carers in the community.
- The project aims to:
- provide information and support to carers in the community.
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## Exploring informal care and social inclusion in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

The project aims to explore the experiences of carers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The project aims to explore the experiences of carers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The project aims to explore the experiences of carers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

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## What we did, and how we did it

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2. l e n l l ( e t - e ) p e r n h l r e ) p e r a t e n r i e p e  
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l u l n a e r u t e r n e n l u l n.
3. a l r l l ( e t - e ) r e e n t l n n l n t p e r l n r e r a  
r l l t e l n p e r n h l r e .



# How we became carers

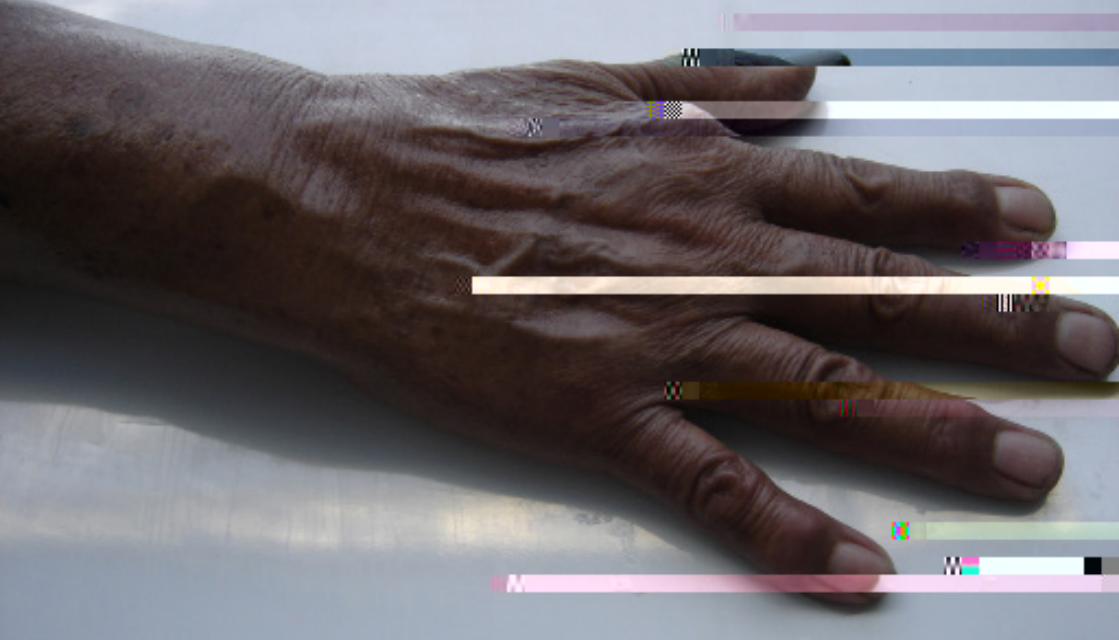
We were never particularly bright, but I think we were a little bit more than most, in the same way, a little bit better. In the end, we were the same as everyone else - we were the same as you are, we were the same as they are, we were the same as everyone else.

## What care means for us

Carers are not meant to be in the same way as everyone else, but they are. They are the same as everyone else, but they are the same as everyone else. They are the same as everyone else, but they are the same as everyone else. They are the same as everyone else, but they are the same as everyone else.

## We became carers because:

- 1. It's not our choice
- 2. It's our duty
- 3. We're not strong
- 4. We don't have the right things
- 5. We're not the same
- 6. We need to be the same as everyone else
- 7. We're not the same



*'How most carers came about to being a carer is because most of the time they're pushed into it because they're seen as "well, that's your family. You deal with it." And there's no one else around... Yeah they might do it out of love, you know. They see there's a family obligation. But, you know, most of the time carers are put, you know, pushed into it basically'*







# Recognition as a carer

We often feel that we are not recognised as carers because we are not in a formal role, we are not in a job, we are not in a team, we are not in a department.

When we are not recognised as carers, we often feel that we are not valued, we are not listened to, we are not taken into account, we are not given a say in decisions, we are not given a chance to contribute, we are not given a chance to be heard.

**We do not always recognise ourselves as carers because it's part of our:**

- 1. role
- 2. responsibility
- 3. job
- 4. culture

A d d h e r e r e h m e r r e r m a u a a r e t t h e -  
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h r t e h h e r e r e e l e r.

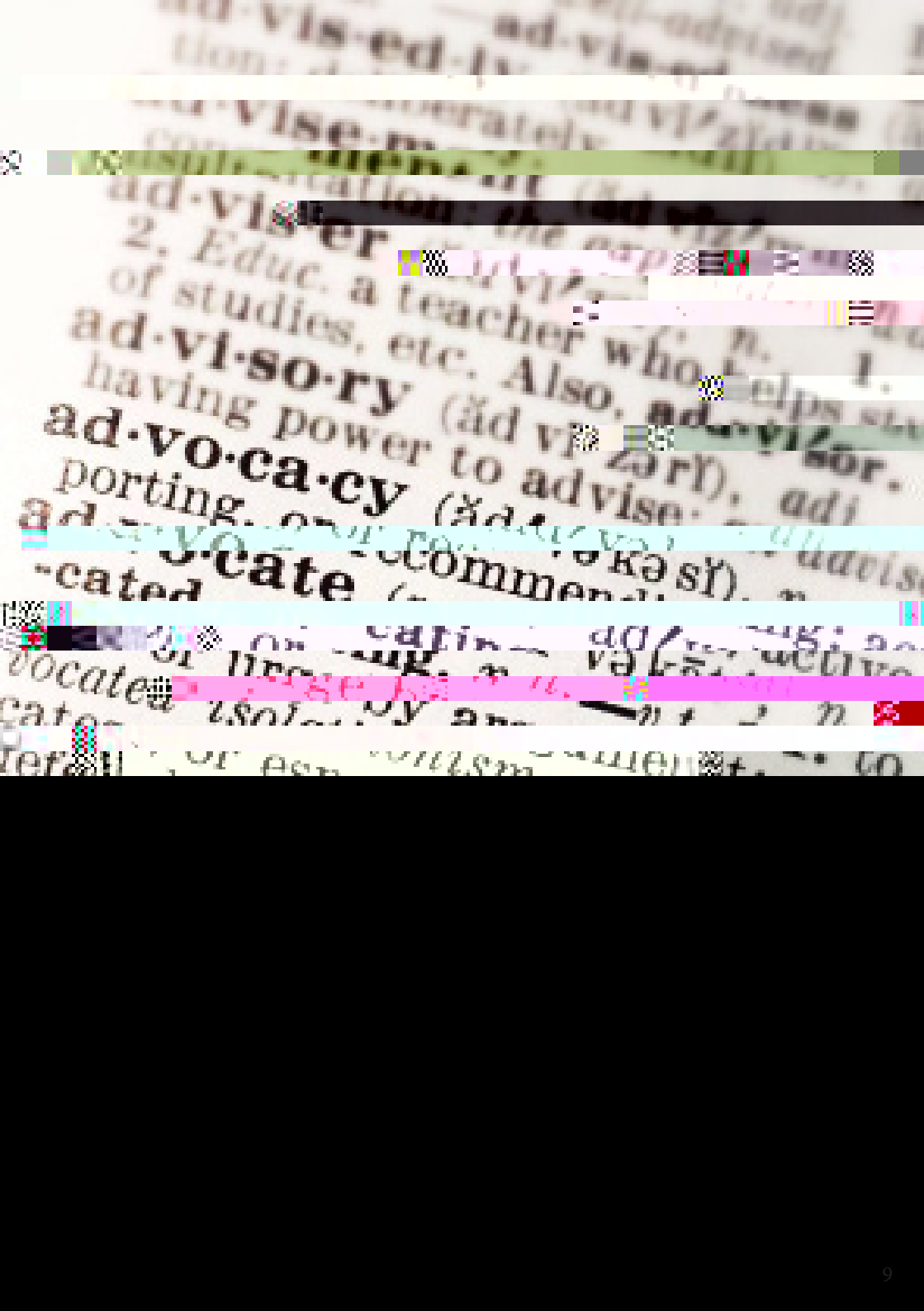
*'I care for my son...he lives on his own. I'm forever telling him...because he lives in a rental they can kick him out any time, that sort of thing. I mean he's not dirty, dirty, but he just doesn't put things away'*

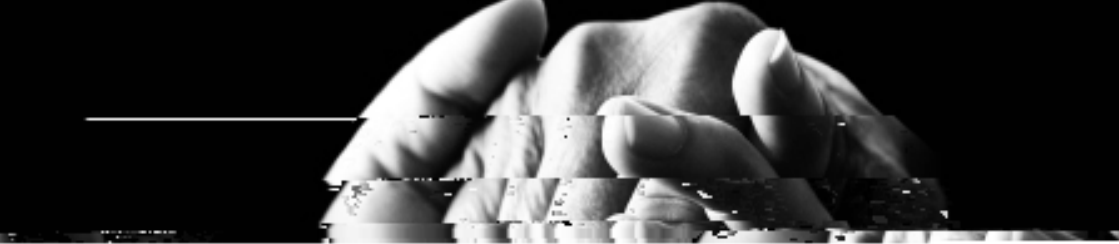
*'She does rely on mum and dad to - to do things now because she can't. Like, they've taken her licence away. So, no, mum and dad now have to transport her if she needs to go to medical appointments or just, well basically go anywhere you know'*

*'When it's a family member, you don't expect them to go and apply for Centrelink because that's to get assistance. But then when the carers do go to get assistance it's the written role...and they get told "Fill in this paper in." Don't ask whether or not can you read and write. "Are you able to fill this form in?"'*

## Who we care for

W e r e r e e h h u r m l e a a e l l e, a r h l h e h  
h t e r m a e h h e e, m e h l h e, h h e e e r. a l h h e h u e h r  
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r h e m e h a r e e e r e r e r e a h e r.





*Being an advocate for the people we care for can be difficult and time-consuming when we are faced with situations, services and individuals who do not understand what it means to be a carer and the responsibilities we have to the people we care for, or where racism exists and means that we cannot have our voices heard and accepted.*



# How the carer roles have affected our lives

Behind the scenes, carers play a vital role in the lives of those they care for. They provide support, care and companionship, often at a significant cost to their own lives.

## The rewards and opportunities afforded from caring

Carers often find themselves in a unique position, where they can make a difference to someone's life. They often find themselves in a position where they can help someone who is struggling, and in the process, they can also help themselves. Carers often find themselves in a position where they can help someone who is struggling, and in the process, they can also help themselves.

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## The challenges of being an Aboriginal carer

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*'Being a carer, too, you're only allowed so many hours away from that person. I think you're only allowed, what, four hours away...And yet when you look at if you had a doctor's appointment for yourself on some occasion there's four hours gone just there, depending on the doctor you've gone to see, you know. So there's your time gone. So don't worry about doing shopping in that four hours, you know, that week or that, you know, or anything else because your four hours has gone'*

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*'It's the same for young carers. Young carers, now, they should be at school. They should be at school full time. But if they care for somebody they – and because, I mean, they have to apply for Centrelink payment. They have to. Being a young carer they actually meet the criteria. However, they're not allowed to attend school full-time.'*

*'They can't do anything. They can't go up and say, "I'd like to go away for a couple of days", because they definitely don't have anybody there. That's the reason they're being a young carer.'*

# What things we do outside of our caring roles

Arlin, her eldest daughter, had a little bit of a...  
her... me... when... the... her... ..  
... ..

*'If she wants to go around and see them we can't because I - I have to go with her. If I don't want to go with her, well, she can't go. That's what sort of, you know, ties you down kind of thing'*

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*'I play bowls. Lawn bowls. Top too. Yeah, almost. That's my Tuesday's and Thursday's; isn't it uncle? Playing a long time.'*

*'We do the retreats where we take them for a week... You know, they go away and they relax. They do basically what they want to do, but the staff are there to support them. But it still doesn't fit everybody... Some can't go because they just won't leave the caree - because they don't want to be in that situation or, you*







In urr e r d h r r , e e u r m ur m l e , d e n h  
h e l a ur , n e e e e r e r h r e e n ur m l e t t  
b a u a a r e r t e r e r e e l e r a l a u t  
b e r t l l e u a a h .



# What's important for us

|

'Yeah, but this is through the hospital now. This is Medicare Local through the hospital, will assist but you have to meet their criteria. And if you don't meet their criteria then you don't get assisted. But then when they do assist you, you only get a certain amount.'

'And they don't care in Adelaide, you know, they don't think you've got to drive three hours to get there so you can go early.'

### Advocates - employed on full-time and on-going basis

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### Aordable health and dental services

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### Access to information about changes to policies, services and funding

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### Make it easier for Aboriginal people to become volunteers

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'Make it easy for volunteers to be brought in. Because as an Aboriginal person it's very daunting to come in and fill all that paperwork in, you know. Then we have to - then they have to have a police check done. The minute you say police check, " No, don't worry about it. Not going any further." But it's having, you know, a volunteer come in whose Aboriginal to be able to help hand your washing our or, know know, do your gardening, you know, mow your lawn for you.'

'And it's the carers who want to be able to become those volunteers because they've been us. Especially the past carers. They've been there, they've done that. They know, you know, they've worked that, well, not worked in it, but they've - the person that they cared for were in that same situation. So bringing them in as a volunteer to support them as a carer would be great.'

