

Integrated Carer Support Service (ICSS) Evaluation: Carer Gateway

Summary of key evaluation findings from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers

Overview

Thank you for being part of the evaluation of Carer Gateway. Carer Gateway is part of the Integrated Carer Support Service. Your feedback will help inform policy decisions to make Carer Gateway better.

This summary shows what we learned about Carer Gateway relevant to Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander carers and service providers.

Findings

There were mixed responses about whether Carer Gateway was helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers.

- Generally, carers were satisfied with the services, and all service types resulted in improvements in wellbeing of many carers who accessed them. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers improved their wellbeing when they used Carer Gateway, but had less improvement than non-Indigenous carers, as did carers in remote and very remote areas.
- Some carers talked positively about the benefits of immediate support (like respite) and the impacts on their wellbeing and stress.
- Some carers were more neutral or negative about the services making a difference, saying they would access emergency respite, but then go back to the stresses of their everyday caring role.
- Some carers thought some of the services were not culturally appropriate or accessible, particularly for those who live in regional and remote areas. Some service providers have adapted methods for engaging with and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers.
- Some carers valued the connection with Carer Gateway and the information, support and resources from staff.
- Factors that helped carers to care included: feeling comfortable when speaking to workers, being listened to, information being provided in a manner they could understand, and being referred to the right support.
- Challenges identified by carers were staff with inappropriate attitudes or lacking training, the number of reviews required, and the varying quality of services.

Transition to Carer Gateway

Compared to the old process, overall Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers found it harder to access respite and to contact Carer Gateway provider when they needed help.

Carers Star™ assessment

Although the Carers Star™ assessment was seen as a good change by most non-Indigenous carers and stakeholders, Service providers thought the assessment was not culturally safe for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers.

Experiences of services

The experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers depended on where they lived, and which providers they used.

Carers often talked about an individual or a service provider they were connected to, which was sometimes an NDIS or other service provider and not always someone part of Carer Gateway. This shows that some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people might prefer to return to the people they already have a relationship with instead of trying somewhere new. This also shows that service providers receiving funding from multiple sources or co-locating services are acting as a “one-stop-shop” for carers and care recipients, and may also indicate a lack of awareness about Carer Gateway.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation used different methods including reviews of performance monitoring reports, analysis of program data, surveys, interviews with carers, service providers and stakeholders.

The Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC), UNSW Sydney, UNSW Canberra, the Social Research Centre (SRC), and Ipsos Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Unit conducted the evaluation.