

Carers Resources and Planning Kit



Contact details

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This resource was developed with funding from the Victorian Government via funding from the DFFH Carers Employment Support Program.



An electronic copy of this kit is available on our website for ease of use when following hyperlinks.

Welcome to the Linking Carers to Vocational Opportunity Project.

Linking Carers to Vocational Opportunity Project.

This project was funded by the Victorian Government between November 2021 and December 2023 to assist unpaid carers to explore their options and prepare themselves for a return to work or study.

For most carers this is a long-term process with every carers journey being different.

This resource and planning kit was developed as part of this project and has been updated to reflect information current at the time of the conclusion of the project (December 2023).

The project can no longer project additional supports to carers but we hope this resource will be useful as a starting point for carers exploring their options.

Goal setting for carers

Looking for work that fits in with your needs as a carer can be challenging, particularly if your days are busy and unpredictable. You may feel like your situation and priorities have changed since you became a carer and your work preferences may be different now as a result.

Activity!*

Life skills or 'soft skills' as they are often referred, are personal attributes or traits that influence how effectively you interact with others and manage difficult situations. Well-developed 'soft skills' make it easier to form relationships with people, create trust and dependability, and lead teams.

Use the list below to help identify personal traits that help you manage your caring responsibilities.

(Circle or highlight the ones that you feel apply to you)

Active listener

Adaptable

Assertive

Attentive

Collaborative

Considerate

Creative

Decisive

Dependable

Determined

Efficient

Empathetic

Flexible

Hardworking

Independent

Innovative

Insightful

Motivated

Patient

Proactive

Resilient

Resourceful

Responsive

Self-starter

TIP!

Think of the how your friends and family would describe you

Employability skills are the non-technical skills needed to get a job. Often referred to as 'soft skills', they include skills such as:

- Communication
- Team work
- Problem solving
- Initiative
- Planning and organising
- Decision making
- Self-management

These skills are highly valued by employers and industry. So your ability to provide examples of how you developed these skills is valuable when you're looking for work.



Carers have a wide range of transferrable employability skills.

Activity!

Have a go at listing some of your everyday tasks that demonstrate employability skills:

What planning and organising tasks would you do regularly?

(eg. Organise appointments, make checklists)

What financial or budget activities do you manage?

(eg. Household budget, deal with Centrelink, prepare tax return)

What do you need to juggle or multitask?

(eg. Co-ordinate providers and services)

What administrative activities do you manage?

(eg. Take notes at meetings, fill in forms, etc)



What do you do on the computer or online?

(eg. locate services, manage email, etc)

What is your approach to dealing with problems or managing a crisis?

eg. Recognise warning signs, take action to avoid certain behaviours, etc)

What health care tasks would you do regularly?

What household tasks would you do regularly?

What personal care tasks do you provide regularly?

How do you maintain a safe environment?

What community activities do you participate in or contribute to regularly?

(eg. Peer support networks, school groups, etc)

What strategies do you use to manage your own wellbeing?

Do you manage others?

Do you encourage appropriate behaviour of others?

What kind of information do you communicate or collect?

(eg. Build rapport & communicate with a range of professionals and service providers)

Career Guidance Advice

| Service | Description | Local contact details |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Skills and Jobs Centres | <p>Skills and Jobs Centres provide expert advice on training and employment opportunities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Qualified, free and independent careers advice→ Workshops to support people into education, training or employment→ Help with job searching→ Referrals and job matching to local employment opportunities→ Help preparing resumes and key selection criteria→ Apprenticeship and traineeship advice→ Help using the victorian skills gateway→ Referral to welfare support and financial advice→ Help in using your existing skills to align to a new job or to undertake new training→ Information on employment trends→ Information on areas with a shortage in skills and employment opportunities→ Help with career and training plans to support a successful career transition. <p>Skills and Jobs Centres engage with local industries to ensure they can meet the needs of their local communities. They also work with local councils, State and Commonwealth government departments to support key projects.</p> | <p>Swinburne Skills and Jobs Centre Phone: (03) 9726 1450 Email: skillsandjobs@swinburne.edu.au Website: www.swinburne.edu.au/life-at-swinburne/student-support-services/swinburne-skills-jobs-centre/</p> <p>Box Hill Skills and Jobs Centre Phone: (03) 8892 1350 Website: www.boxhill.edu.au/events/skills-and-jobs-centre-bookings/</p> <p>Holmesglen Skills and Jobs Centre Phone: (03) 9564 2755 Website: holmesglen.edu.au/Industry/Holmesglen-Skills-and-Jobs-Centre/</p> |

**When you need the
skills but not a full
qualification,
a Learn Local course
is a great option.**

Training Options

| Service | Description | Local contact details |
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| <p>Learn Local pre-accredited training</p> | <p>Learn Local pre-accredited programs are designed to be flexible to meet learners' needs and support them to return to study, improve their literacy and numeracy skills, gain a qualification, broaden their employment options and learn new skills. These programs are particularly valuable for those who have been out of school/training for some time and need to rebuild confidence.</p> <p>They provide pathways to further education such as accredited and TAFE courses as well as directly to employment. Programs are government funded so very affordable and classes are usually smaller than in other training environments.</p> | <p>Many Learn Local Organisations in the East belong to the SwinLocal Network. You can find their contact details and a list of courses on the SwinLocal website: www.swinlocal.com</p> <p>Find a Learn Local Website: www.learnlocal.org.au/find-a-learn-local</p> |
| <p>TAFE</p> | <p>There are seventeen TAFE colleges in Victoria. Those servicing the East include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Swinburne University of Technology with campuses at Croydon, Wantirna South and Hawthorn → Box Hill Institute with three campuses at Box Hill & one in Lilydale → Holmesglen TAFE with campuses at Chadstone and Waverley → Chisholm TAFE with a main campus at Dandenong | <p>www.tafe.educationapps.vic.gov.au/s/</p> <p>www.swinburne.edu.au</p> <p>www.boxhill.edu.au</p> <p>www.holmesglen.edu.au</p> <p>www.chisholm.edu.au</p> |

| Service | Description | Local contact details |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Free TAFE</p> | <p>From January 2024 you can now access more than 80 Free TAFE qualifications and short courses without the cost of tuition fees, even if you already hold a VET qualification or degree.</p> <p>In addition to these state funded courses, the Australian government has announced an additional 300,000 Fee-Free TAFE and vocational education places, available nationally from January 2024.</p> <p>Students who have complete any Free TAFE program can also access the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE) under Free TAFE. This is to encourage and support industry-qualified people to pursue a career in VET training.</p> | <p>www.skills.vic.gov.au/s/contact-the-tafe-and-training-line</p> |

| Service | Description | Local contact details |
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| Apprenticeships and traineeships | <p>Apprenticeships and Traineeships are a great way to set yourself up for the career you want. They allow you to combine work and study and gain a nationally recognised qualification.</p> <p>Traineeships are similar to apprenticeships but they concentrate on vocational or job areas such as office administration, information technology or hospitality.</p> <p>For independent advice about apprenticeships and traineeships contact the nearest Skills and Jobs Centre</p> | <p>Swinburne Skills and Jobs Centre Phone: 9726 1450 Email: skillsandjobs@swinburne.edu.au Website: www.swinburne.edu.au/life-at-swinburne/student-support-services/swinburne-skills-jobs-centre/</p> <p>Box Hill Skills and Jobs Centre Phone: (03) 8892 1350 Website: www.boxhill.edu.au/events/skills-and-jobs-centre-bookings/</p> <p>Holmesglen Skills and Jobs Centre Phone: (03) 9564 2755 Website: holmesglen.edu.au/Industry/Holmesglen-Skills-and-Jobs-Centre/</p> |

| Service | Description | Local contact details |
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| Community-based Registered Training Organisations | <p>Community-based RTOs are small training organisations usually based at a Learn Local or Community House. Under government regulations they must meet the same quality assurance and registration criteria as at TAFE. However, they often provide smaller classes in a community location that may suit adult learners better than TAFE.</p> | <p>Cire Services, Lilydale www.cire.org.au/training</p> <p>Park Orchards Community House and Learning Centre www.parkorchards.org.au</p> <p>Pines Learning, Donvale www.pineslearning.com.au</p> <p>Mountain District Learning Centre, Ferntree Gully www.mdlc.org.au</p> <p>The Avenue Neighbourhood House, Blackburn South www.theavenue.org.au/education-3</p> |

| Service | Description | Local contact details |
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| <p>Reconnect Programs</p> | <p>The Reconnect program assists participants to overcome the barriers preventing them from engaging in education, training and employment and provides support for further study or employment pathways.</p> <p>The following people are eligible for Reconnect support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Young people aged between 17 to 19 years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Who are not engaged in education or training for six months or more (less than 8 hours per week). → Mature participants aged between 20 to 64 years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Unemployed for six months or more (less than 8 hours per week) and → Not engaged in education or training for six months or more (less than 8 hours per week). | <p>Reconnect Co-ordinator Mountain District Learning Centre 13-15 The Avenue, Ferntree Gully Phone: (03) 9758 7859 Email: office@mdlc.org.au</p> <p>Senior Case Worker- Reconnect Program – Pines Learning Monday-Thursday 1/520 Blackburn Road Doncaster East 3109 Phone: (03) 9842 6726 Mobile: 0421 963 630 Website: www.pineslearning.com.au</p> <p>Reconnect Co-ordinator Cire Services Level 1, 7-9 John St, Lilydale Phone: 1300 835 235</p> <p>Reconnect Co-ordinator Box Hill Institute Box Hill Phone: 1300 269 445</p> |

Looking for Employment

| Service | Description | Local contact details |
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| Workforce Australia | <p>Workforce Australia is an Australian Government-funded network of organisations that are contracted by the Australian Government, through the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, to deliver employment services to unemployed job seekers on Government income support payments and employers.</p> <p>Whether you're receiving income support or not, they can help you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Find a new job→ Start looking for work→ Transition to a different industry→ Find training and support services <p>Additional features are available to people using Workforce Australia as part of their obligations for income support.</p> <p>To search for your nearest Workforce Australia providers: www.workforceaustralia.gov.au/individuals/coaching/providers</p> | <p>ECHO Australia Freecall number: 1300 194 240 Phone: (03) 9800 1870 Email: echo@echoaustralia.com</p> <p>Salvation Army Employment Plus Phone: 13 61 23 Email: ringwoodsite@salvationarmy.org.au</p> <p>Sarina Russo Job Access Freecall number: 13 15 59 Phone: 13 15 59 Fax: 13 98475699 Email: SRJARingwood@sarinarusso.com.au</p> |

Tips for carers not currently in the workforce

Skills and Jobs Centres are a great first port-of-call when you are thinking of looking to enter the workforce, start training or reskill. They will assist you to create a career plan to guide you. This may include:

- Articulating your values and motivations
- Evaluating your existing skills
- Deciding on a career direction including identifying training needs
- Setting clear career goals

Once you are prepared to commence a job search then a Jobs Victoria Advocate will be a valuable resource for you.

Always have a current resume

Without a well-written, well-organised resume, you won't be able to take advantage of opportunities that come your way. Probably the most important career advice is to learn how to write a resume that will make you competitive in today's market.



Career building tips for those in the workforce

Build your network

Network both inside and outside of your organisation so that you have options if your situation changes. You want people to remember your name when interesting projects are being discussed. Building a strong network is worth time and effort.

Ask for feedback

Another piece of career advice is to ask for feedback. The only way to improve is to know what to improve on. Feedback will help you meet expectations and avoid any miscommunications that might jeopardise your prospects for growth. Employees who proactively ask for feedback from management and then implement it wisely typically end up being the top performers in their field.

Be persistent

Work hard, believe in yourself and don't give up. Once you've set yourself a goal, be single-minded about it. Write down your goals, review them regularly and get support to achieve them.

Self-employment assistance

| Service | Description | Local contact details |
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| Self employment Assistance Program | <p>Self-Employment Assistance can help you turn your business idea or existing small business into a viable business. The program allows you to choose the level of support that meets your needs and the needs of your small business.</p> <p>Self-Employment Assistance replaced the New Business Assistance with NEIS program in July 2022. Self-Employment assistance programs include the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Exploring self-employment workshops→ Business plan development→ Free accredited small business training→ Business advice sessions→ Business health checks→ Small business coaching | <p>www.sarinarusso.com/business-startups</p> <p>APM Employment Services (Boronia) Phone: 1300 006 347</p> |
| Learn Locals | <p>Many of the Learn Local organisations offer small business planning courses and workshops as well as courses such as bookkeeping, online accounting, marketing and social media and website development.</p> | <p>Find a Learn Local Website www.learnlocal.org.au/find-a-learn-local</p> <p>Ask at the venue hosting the forum for their course guide or the details of other local organisations.</p> |

**A great practical guide to
planning a small business
or side hustle is**

How to start a side hustle

by Kaylene Langford

**Check her website for some
great resources**

www.startupcreative.com.au

Volunteering as a pathway

| Service | Description | Local contact details |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Volunteer for Knox | <p>Volunteer for Knox aims to place passionate and willing volunteers with local not-for-profit organisations in need. The Volunteer Resource Centre's purpose is to increase volunteering opportunities for organisations and individuals in Knox. Volunteer for Knox can help you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Find a volunteer position→ Provide ongoing support and training | <p>Phone: 0429 968 822 Email: office@volunteerforknox.com.au</p> |
| Eastern Volunteers | <p>Eastern volunteers is a Volunteer Resource Centre servicing the LGAs of Maroondah, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges. They match volunteers with existing vacancies.</p> | <p>Phone: (03) 9870 7822 Email: info@eastervolunteers.org.au</p> |
| First Impressions Clothing Exchange | <p>FICE provides volunteering opportunities to gain work skills and training in their quality pre-loved clothing exchange.</p> | <p>First Impressions Clothing Exchange 7-9 John Street Lilydale 3140 Phone: 0499 221 150 Email: Reneecooke@cire.org.au</p> |

Studies have found that volunteering is associated with up to a 27% higher odds of employment.

27%

Assistance with equipment and clothing for returning to work

| Service | Description | Local contact details |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| First impressions clothing exchange | Cire services – Lilydale. Good quality second hand clothing, handbags, etc. | 7-9 John Street Lilydale, 3140 Phone: 0499 221 150 Email: Reneecooke@cire.org.au |
| Fitted for work | To help women experiencing disadvantage to get work, keep work and navigate their world of work. Fitted for work's vision is independence and transformation for women. Their goal is to provide women with practical skills, knowledge, self-esteem and know-how so that they can move forward with confidence in the workplace. They provide not just clothes, etc but a range of supports for return to work. | www.fittedforwork.org/our-programs-and-services |

Carer support agencies (including respite)

| Service | Description | Local contact details |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Care Guidance</p> | <p>The purpose of Care Guidance is to empower all families to find the right care for their loved ones. They ensure you have all the information you need, and assist you in every step of your journey. They will help you choose the right home, including helping to review your options and tour the homes, then help manage the transition with you.</p> <p>The cost of the service is free to you. Their fee is covered by the aged care home you choose.</p> | <p>Suites 305-306 452 Johnston St Abbotsford Phone: 1300 442 383 Website: www.careguidance.com.au</p> |
| <p>Difference Journeys Autism</p> | <p>Different Journeys provide social platforms that connect autistic youth and autistic adults and their families in inclusive, safe and supportive environments. This enables them to provide individualised wraparound supports.</p> | <p>Phone: 0490 774 068 Email: welcome@differentjourneysautism.com Website: www.differentjourneysautism.com/</p> |
| <p>North East Metro Family and Wellbeing Connect</p> | <p>A peer-operated service that can help you to navigate the mental health and wellbeing system and provide practical and financial support that can make things a little easier.</p> | <p>3/50 Upper Heidelberg Rd Ivanhoe (outreach in Lilydale and Belgrave) Phone: (03) 8850 4150 Website: accesshc.org.au/north-east-metro-family-and-wellbeing-connect/</p> |

| Service | Description | Local contact details |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Outer East Interchange | Outer East Interchange – is our largest local disability service provider. They have over 2000 clients and run a carer support program for the Outer East. They have a newsletter and active face book page and happy to promote services for carers | 5 Yose St, Ferntree Gully, 3156 Phone: (03) 9758 5522 Website: www.ioe.org.au |
| Villa Maria Catholic Homes (VMCH) | Villa Maria providing Aged and Disability Services across the Eastern region with an emphasis on carer supports. | Phone: 1300 698 624 Website: www.vmch.com.au |
| Wellways | Wellways services are provided to carers, family members and friends of a person with mental health issues. Services in the outer-east include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Family services → Psycho-social support → Recovery, coaching and personal care → Prevention and recovery → Sustainable housing | Suite 8, 602 Whitehorse Rd Mitcham, 3132 Phone: 1300 111 400 Website: wellways.org |

Carer Gateway

Carer Gateway is an Australian Government program providing free services and support for carers.

If you care for a family member or friend with disability, a medical condition, mental illness, or who is frail due to age, then Carer Gateway can help you.

The Australian Government works with a range of health and carer organisations across Australia, known as Carer Gateway service providers, to deliver services to carers no matter where they live in Australia.

You can access Carer Gateway services in a number of ways, including by phone and online. By calling 1800 422 737 Monday to Friday between 8am and 5pm and selecting option 1, you can speak with your local Carer Gateway service provider.

Carer Gateway provides many services to support carers in their caring role, including:

- In-person and online peer support groups
- Tailored support packages to help with accessing planned respite, transport services, and more
- In-person and phone counselling
- In-person and online self-guided coaching
- Online skills courses to support your wellbeing and understanding of legal responsibilities relating to the caring role
- Access to emergency respite if you suddenly find you can't provide care, for example if you become ill or injured.



Government assistance for carers

What payments you can get as a carer?

You may be eligible for different payments depending on your circumstances and those of the person you care for. These payments include:

- Carer Payment, an income support payment if you give constant care to someone who has a disability, has a severe medical condition, or is an adult who is frail aged
- Carer Allowance, a fortnightly supplement if you give additional daily care to someone who has a disability, has a medical condition, or is frail aged.

You may be able to get both Carer Payment and Carer Allowance at the same time.

If you get Carer Payment, you can work, study or train for up to 25 hours per week and still get paid. The 25 hours includes meal breaks and travel time.

If you're getting Carer Payment and you or your partner are working, you'll need to report the employment income to us.

Carer Supplement is an annual payment. It helps cover costs when caring for someone with disability or a medical

condition. You'll get Carer Supplement if you're getting Carer Payment or Carer Allowance for a period that includes 1 July.

Child Disability Assistance Payment is an annual payment if you get Carer Allowance. You're eligible if both of the following apply. You:

- Got Carer Allowance for a period that includes 1 July
- Provided care for a child with disability or a severe medical condition.

Carer Adjustment Payment is a one-off payment for carers of a child aged under 7 years. It helps families with a child diagnosed with a severe medical condition or disability following a catastrophic event.

You're under 25

Young carers may also be eligible for Youth Allowance for students and Australian Apprentices if they're studying full time.

You may also be able to claim the Ex-Carer Allowance (Child) Health Care Card. It gives you access to cheaper medicines and health care.

The Young Carer Bursary Program gives payments to eligible students aged 12 to 25. Read more about the Young Carer Bursary Program on the Department of Social Services website.

You care for a child

There's support available if you care for a child. You may be able to get:

- Parenting Payment if you're a job seeker and the main carer for a young child
- Family Tax Benefit, a 2-part payment that helps with the cost of raising a child
- Child Care Subsidy, which helps you with child care costs.

There's additional support available if you care for a child with disability or severe medical condition.



Linking
Carers
TO VOCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY