

Media Release

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Caring for the carer: National Carers Week

Like most carers, Aruna Perera, 68, doesn't have the time or inclination to put herself first. She's also dealing with the kind of grief parents dread.

October 13-19 is National Carers Week, a time to recognise, celebrate and raise awareness of the 3 million Australians who provide care to a family member or friend. For-purpose aged and disability organisation [VMCH](#) is one of Victoria's largest state-funded carer support providers, supporting almost 3,000 unpaid carers.

The 24-member Carer Services team focuses on the health and wellbeing of the carer and offers education and information, personal care, flexible respite and a multitude of special events.

Aruna connected with VMCH when her daughter, Morina, began receiving palliative care in 2022. Morina was diagnosed with bowel cancer aged just 37, and endured almost 10 years of chemo, radiation and surgeries before finally succumbing to the disease last year, aged 46.

"Morina was a very independent, strong and brave girl," Aruna says. "As a family, we were there to give her all the support we could and help and understanding whenever she needed. It was so good to have VMCH help too. My daughter was finding it difficult to walk her dog, so they helped us find someone to do that, also to help with cleaning the house, and hospital transfers."

Aruna now cares for her husband Kuranage, 76, who struggles with rheumatoid arthritis and is recovering from a stroke. Aruna, who also has osteo arthritis, is reluctant to leave Kuranage's side. VMCH Case Manager Ishita Bains links the couple with support through My Aged Care, including garden maintenance, so they can enjoy their outdoor space.

"I'm so thankful to Ishita – she has been so kind and has explained everything to us about the help we're eligible to receive. Our two sons and their families are very supportive, but they are also busy with their own commitments."

VMCH Carer Services Manager Fredricka Gonsalves says her team tries to provide meaningful experiences and supports for suit individuals to help combat common challenges including social isolation and burnout.

"The work carers do often goes unnoticed, but it is essential in maintaining their loved one's independence and connection to their community."

Aruna says support from VMCH has given her "great strength and courage".

"Not just financially, but to know there are people out there who care about us and want to help us. My daughter was really relieved when she knew we were getting support from VMCH too. It gave her peace of mind before she passed that we would be looked after."

If you would like to learn more about VMCH Carer Services, call us on 1300 698 624.

Media enquiries

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About VMCH

Here at VMCH, our services are as diverse as the people we support.

Our values underpin the work we do. As a Catholic, for-purpose organisation, love, joy, hospitality and courage aren't just words to us, they guide us in everything we do.

While we've been around for over a century, we're always moving forward. Always staying true to who we are by supporting people and families to live their best lives; providing a place to call home and spaces to learn and grow.

Our professional and compassionate teams are with you on your life journey; helping you with a wide range of support from early learning and therapy, specialist education, disability services, affordable homes, residential aged care, retirement living and at-home aged care.

