

# The cost of caring too high [AU] <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

A quarter of people responsible for looking after children, old people or the disabled are considering leaving their jobs to care for loved ones themselves because care costs too much.

And another quarter have already cut back on working hours for the same reason.

According to a survey funded by some of Australia's biggest companies, the affordability of care has led to an exodus from the labour force.

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Taskforce chairwoman Juliet Bourke said she had met 14 government officials, including Employment Minister Kevin Andrews and advisers to the Treasurer and Prime Minister, to present them with the findings. "Essentially, when workers with caring responsibilities do the maths, 25 per cent say they can't really afford to work," she said.

Ms Bourke said the research revealed that Australia was in the grip of a "work/cost-of-care crisis", and without strong leadership the situation would not improve.

...

The taskforce is looking at options to alleviate the crisis, including extending the 30 per cent childcare rebate to other caring responsibilities, such as elderly and disabled care.

This year, 60 per cent of unemployed carers said they would return to the workforce if care was more affordable. This situation is made worse for parents, with 89 per cent saying that affordability of care influenced their current working arrangements, up 21 per cent on the 2004 survey.

The survey of 1000 workers also found that nearly 79 per cent said affordability of care influenced their current working arrangements.

...

- reprinted from The Australian

**Region:** Australia and New Zealand <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** affordability <sup>[3]</sup>

funding <sup>[4]</sup>

accessibility <sup>[5]</sup>

mother's labour force participation <sup>[6]</sup>

work/life balance <sup>[7]</sup>

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