



Christopher White with his mother Audrey at their home in Lindisfarne

Carer Gateway is helping carers navigate the maze

RECOGNITION and support have allowed Christopher White to care for his mother in the comfort of her home in Lindisfarne.

Christopher took on the role of primary carer for his mother, Audrey, over 4 years ago after noticing a decline in her health and mobility.

"For the past 10 years mum has been slowly declining," Christopher said.

"She was requiring more support with everyday tasks, and it was no longer safe to have her at home by herself."

Taking on a caring role is challenging and often means sacrifice. But for Christopher, taking on this role was an easy decision.

"Mum wanted to stay in the comfort of her home, and for me that was the number one priority," he said.

"While mum is still able she needs assistance with personal hygiene, attending appointments, shopping and housework."

Christopher's caring role is becoming increasingly demanding, and he sometimes has

difficulty finding time for himself.

Four years ago, another carer referred Christopher to Carer Gateway. It has since enabled him to access in home respite and counselling and meet other carers in a similar role.

Care2Serve, the service arm of Carers Tasmania, is the local Tasmania provider of carer support services through Carer Gateway, an Australian Government initiative developed to provide carers with advice and information and a range of tailored support

packages.

"Care2Serve have organised a support worker to come and be with mum three hours every Monday," he said.

"This support has been life-changing.

"It allows me get out of the house and gives mum some time to have a break from me."

Christopher has also been attending counselling sessions offered by Care2Serve and participating in regular workshops and events.

"I find the counselling service fantastic," he said.

"It helps me to have a clearer mind, which is essential in my caring role.

"If I can't take care of myself, I can't look after mum."

A few weeks ago, Christopher attended a carers support session at Kingston.

"I was apprehensive about attending, but within moments of being there, I felt understood and appreciated," he said.

"They understood when I said I wasn't coping, which made a lot of difference.

"It is a relief to know there are people out

there who understand what I am going through."

"Having all the support in one place is great."

"I know if I have any issues, questions or are need of extra support, I can always turn to Carer Gateway first.

"I can't speak highly enough of the support from Carer Gateway."

Through Carer Gateway, carers can now access vital services, including coordinated support in residential aged care facilities, connection with other carers, advice, and

information on planning for the future, tailored support packages, free access to counselling and personalised sessions with a specialised carer coach.

"It is a relief to know that there are avenues of support that are localised and accessible from the comfort of my home."

If you are in a similar situation and need help with your caring role, contact Carer Gateway. Phone 1800 422 737 (and select 1 from the menu) or check the website at www.carer.gateway.gov.au