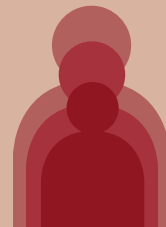


**grandparents**  
V I C T O R I A



# THE ROLES THAT GRANDPARENTS PLAY

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REPORT OF A SURVEY CONDUCTED BY GRANDPARENTS VICTORIA  
2022

## About GPV

In April 2001, Grandparents Victoria (GPV) was formed as an organization based on the belief that grandparents can play a valuable role in supporting and advocating for families and the wider community.

At this early stage, with only four members at the first meeting, it was not certain what the group would do, or how its activities were to be funded, but enthusiasm was high.

For the first two years, GPV focused on consultation with grandparents to learn what challenges they and their families were facing in the 21st century. A series of forums were also held across Victoria to get collect many opinions. Since then, regular forums and surveys have been conducted to verify these early views.

In March 2002, the issues faced by grandparents raising their grandchildren were noted, with the GPV Board deciding that the role of grandparents within child protection would be a priority area of work.

Another landmark was reached in 2004 when GPV staff attended its first local grandparents support group. This was the first of many visits to support groups across the state. In 2010 the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) awarded GPV the contract to establish Kinship Carers Victoria (KCV) as the peak group representing the views of kinship carers. Thus, GPV/KCV emerged as a statewide agency for addressing a range of issues from the viewpoint of grandparents.

GPV/KCV addresses a wide range of issues. However, some, aside from support for kinship carers, appear on its work program year in and year out, with family poverty being the most urgent of all the issues addressed over the years.

GPV/KCV is committed to an ethical approach to its work, undertaking to:

- maintain a commitment to its beliefs and aims, prioritising the wellbeing of families
- maintain confidentiality at all times, protecting the privacy of all who associate with GPV/KCV
- uphold individual rights and time advocate for the rights of disadvantaged groups
- foster a culture of fairness
- respect a diversity of views.

GPV believes that:

- all children must be protected and given every opportunity and support to fulfil their potential
- the needs of families are becoming more complex and the support grandparents can offer to families in general is significant
- grandparents and kinship carers have unique understandings and attitudes that should influence decisions about child wellbeing
- grandparents and kinship carers have a responsibility to engage in public discussions and to act to ensure the wellbeing of child

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## 1...Summary

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Since its foundation, GPV has made a priority of surveying grandparents to discover their views on a variety of topics. One of the subjects which has been canvassed multiple times over the years is the changing role of grandparents, both within their families and in wider society. In particular, the media and others have expressed interest in aspects of grandparenting such as childcare and the effects of grandparents being denied access to their grandchildren. Surveys conducted by GPV which delve into these issues include:

- 2003 Grandparents speak their minds (Vic)
- 2004 Grandparents Speak (National)
- 2010 GPV members speak survey
- 2012 Grandparents speak - a survey on their role
- 2017 Grandparents speak - Federal Election campaign
- 2019 Grandparents speak - the Roles they Play

### **Profile of the grandparents in the 2022 survey**

The 75 survey respondents were all grandparents, drawn from across rural, regional, and metropolitan Victoria. They represented a variety of backgrounds, and ranged in age from 46 to 85. The majority of respondents were female, and just over half of respondents reported that they currently had a partner. For more details, see appendix A

### **Profile of the grandchildren in the 2022 survey**

The grandchildren of the survey respondents ranged from newborn to 39 years of age. Just over a quarter of the grandchildren were already 18 or older, while the remaining three quarters were still under 18. In addition to grandchildren, nine respondents reported that they had great grandchildren, and 18 respondents reported having a grandparent-like relationship with children to whom they were not biologically related. For more details, see appendix B

**The findings of the 2022 survey in snapshot.** This report presents a snap shot of the roles that grandparents played, including participation in the paid workforce, and the roles played both within the family and in the wider community. It looks at how the grandparents felt about the roles they played, as well as what current issues they felt were of most concern to their families and the wider community. This report also provides an estimation of the financial value their contribution, and what supports they felt would help them to continue their roles into the future.

The roles of the Grandparents' in this study were complex and demanding, with the majority of them playing multiple roles; providing a variety of supports to their families, while still participating in the workforce and/or volunteering in the wider community. Consider that:

- 90% of the grandparents in the study provide hands on support to their families. These include childcare during working hours, while parents attend social occasions, and in case of emergencies; and incidental support spending time with the children playing, transporting them, offering advice, and attending kindergarten or school functions. The majority of these grandparents offer multiple supports within the family and many are working in the paid workforce or the community at the same time in addition to their roles in the wider community at the same time
- 25 grandparents in the survey are raising at least one of their grandchildren full-time as kinship carers and a further 5 are easing the pressure on their families with shared caring arrangements.

The financial value of the supports offered by the grandparents in the survey, and outlined above, can be calculated at approximately \$117,678.08 per month.

Financial value of support offered		
Type of Support	# of Grandparents providing this support	Total \$ amount per month
Childcare while parents attend social occasions	37	27,782.82
Childcare while parents are working	36	36,951.84
Emergency or back-up childcare	22	12,041.02
Shared caring arrangements	5	5,607.12
Monthly financial contributions	19	4,855.00
Child rearing 24/7	25	30,440.28
		<b>117,678.08</b>

At the same time as they are supporting families many of the grandparents were still working, either in paid work or as volunteers

- 21 were still working in paid jobs with most of them being satisfied to be doing so.
- 4 grandparents reported that their main contribution to the wider community was through volunteer work with a variety of different organisations.

When looking at all the roles grandparents played in the workforce, community and their families they have been arranged into work and two types of support provided to the families. The combinations of these roles are varied, according to family need and grandparent availability or wherewithal.

Community	Family	Family	#
Work- paid and volunteer	Hands on support, including incidental acts	Financial assistance	9
Work- paid and volunteer	Hands on support, including incidental acts		15
Work- paid and volunteer		Financial assistance	0
	Hands on support, including incidental acts	Financial assistance	14
	Hands on support, including incidental acts		35
		Financial assistance	0
Work- paid and volunteer	Not providing any support to families		1
	Not providing any support to families		1
			<b>75</b>

**An analysis of the ages of the grandparents and their grandchildren suggests that the majority of the grandparents will continue in their caring roles for many years to come.**

Grandparents are sometimes compensated for the roles they play, although this mostly applies to those offering kinship care. The majority felt well supported in their roles, however some noted that they would appreciate supports such as financial assistance, help with chores, or more connection with peers.

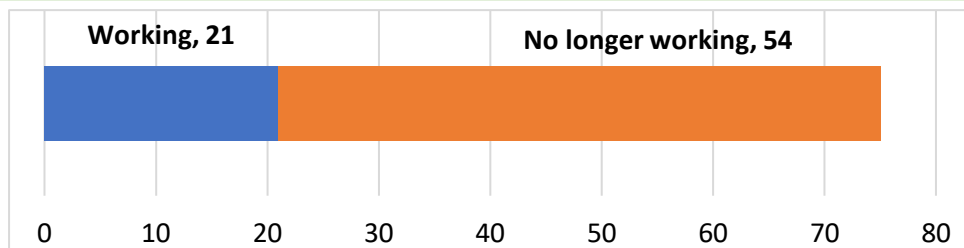
Grandparenting brings both joy and stress. Many grandparents derive a great deal of joy from spending time with their grandchildren, and seeing them growing and thriving. On the other hand, circumstances which brought grandparents stress included being placed in a parental role, managing tricky relationships with extended family, concerns about children who were struggling, and worrying about the children's prospects for the future.

**Grandparents felt that the most important issues affecting their families are:**

- **child and family rights (including those of Indigenous and refugee children),**
- **Out of Home Care (especially kinship care),**
- **mental health,**
- **education, and**
- **environment protection (including play)**

## 2...Grandparents contribution to the paid workforce

21 of the 75 grandparents in the survey were working in paid jobs.



The *working respondents* were divided fairly evenly between full time paid work (7), part time paid work (5), and casual work (9).

The ages at which grandparents were working spread from the youngest at 47 (casual) to the eldest at 80 (part-time)

Of the 21 respondents still in the paid work force, the majority (19 of 21) were generally happy with their situation. Almost half (10 of 21) reported being “unstressed and happy”, with a similar number (9 of 21) reporting that they were sometimes stressed. Only one respondent admitted to being regularly stressed at work. One respondent in the work force did not answer this question.

Of the 54 grandparents not in the paid workforce 37 were retired. While it was not specified in the responses to one particular question, it can be inferred from responses to other questions that; 4 grandparents were unable to work due to disability, 6 grandparents were unable to work due to their responsibilities as kinship carers, and 3 grandparents cited both caring responsibilities and ill health. Four grandparents reported that they are active volunteers (see section 3 for details).

***“I’m building towards feeling very happy,  
I feel a developing sense of agency with my work”  
– HK, grandparent & full-time worker, aged 52***

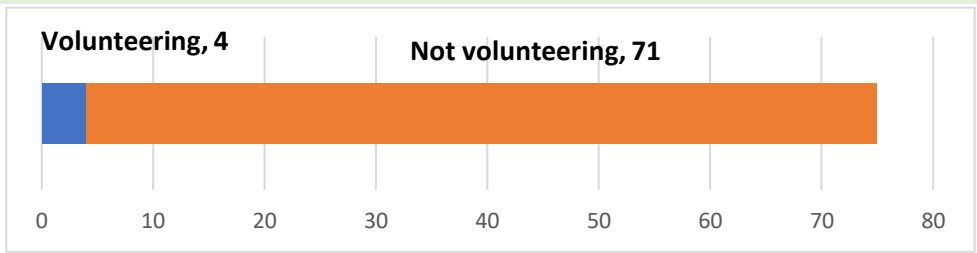
Age range	# of grandparents
45-49	1
50-54	2
55-59	2
60-64	6
65-69	3
70-74	4
75-79	2
80+	1
	21

The retirement age in Australia is currently 67

These three grandparents who were close to eighty years old and still in workforce all reported overall levels of happiness

### 3...Grandparents contribution to the community

4 of the 75 grandparents in the survey were engaged in volunteer work.



These volunteers provided volunteer support to a number of organisations, including a local parish church, a community theatre network, the Lions Club, a local hospital, a local Op Shop, the community library and a surf lifesaving program for children

*Volunteering is about giving back, but I find that being widowed and on my own I need the people contact.*

*In the hospital it's about talking to people, especially those who don't have visitors.  
Volunteering at the theatres is about my own entertainment, because I get to see every show that comes to Bendigo, but it's also about giving back to the town I love.*

*- AH, grandparent and volunteer, aged 74*

Age Range	# of grandparents
60-70	2
71-80	1
81-90	1

The table on the left shows the age ranges of the grandparents who reported that volunteering was their main contribution to wider society. It is noteworthy that two of these are in their late 70s and 80s, and yet still feel the need to contribute to their communities.

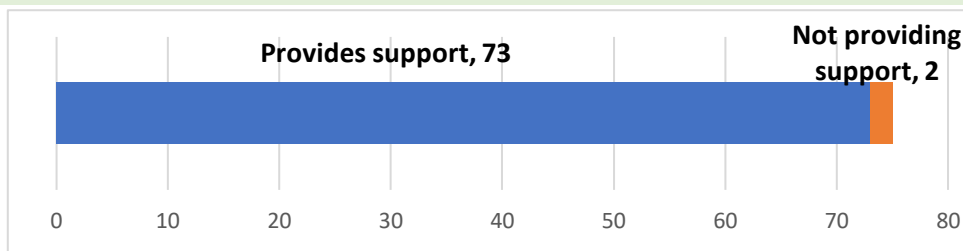
Nationally, the proportion of Australians volunteering has declined in recent years. Between 2006 and 2010, approximately 34-36% of Australian adults had volunteered within the past 12 months. By 2019 this figure had declined to 29%. The circumstances of the global COVID-19 pandemic have made volunteering even more difficult, with ABS figures suggesting that in March 2021, only 21% of Australian adults volunteered with an organisation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Volunteers - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](https://www.aihw.gov.au)



## 4...Grandparents contribution to the family

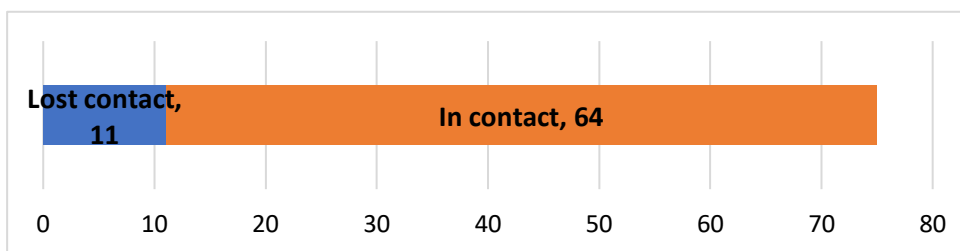
**73 grandparents in the study make a contribution to their families with hands on practical assistance and/or financial assistance.**



Of the two grandparents not providing support, one had lost contact with all of their grandchildren. The other is in their eighties, and their grandchildren are all older teens and young adults.

### 4.1 No contribution to families

**11 of the 75 grandparents in the survey had lost contact with some or all their grandchild whilst supporting others. One grandparent had no contact with all of his/her grandchildren.**



Reasons for loss of contact all related to issues with family relationships. Specific comments from grandparents described circumstances such as custody issues following a relationship breakup, arguments between the grandparents and parents over issues such as financial arrangements or “not trying hard enough”, and situations where the child was in a kinship care arrangement with another branch of the family.

**TABLE 3 - LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH ROLE FORTHOSE WITH NO CONTACT**

Level of satisfaction	# of grandparents
Disheartened some of the time	2
Neutral/mixed feelings most of the time	5
Delighted most of the time	2
Delighted all of the time	2

In the table on the left the grandparents who have lost contact with grandchildren indicate that over half of them have mixed feelings or feeling disheartened also reported that they had lost contact with one or more of their grandchildren.

#### 4.2 A variety of “hands on” supports

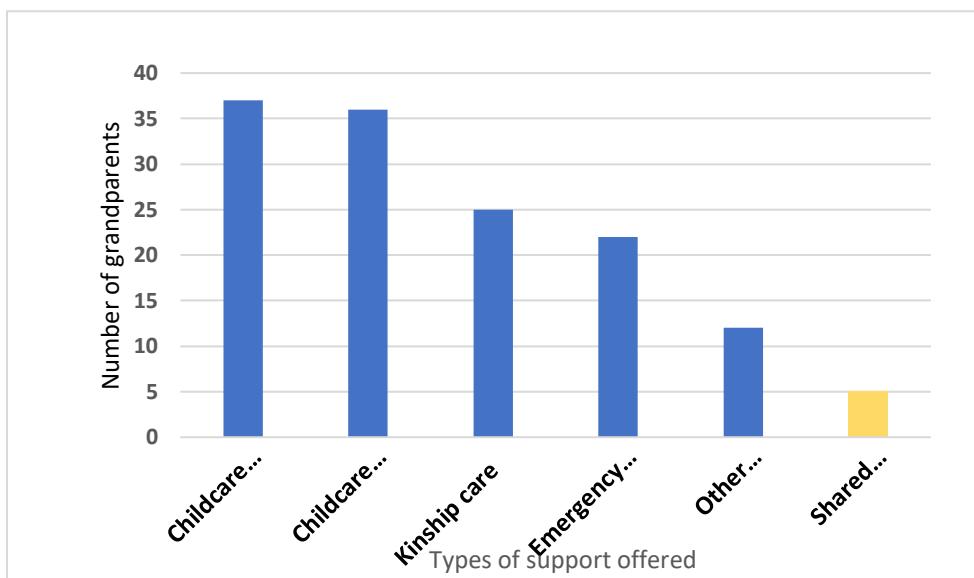
**73 of the 75 grandparents in the survey provided *hands-on* support to at least some of their grandchildren.**

One grandparent who did not engage in any “hands on” interactions with any of their grandchildren was because the majority of their grandchildren were older teens or adults. One other grandparent reported that they did not engage in any “hands on” interactions with their grandchildren because they had lost contact with them due to family circumstances.

Across the grandparents providing hands on support a total of 198 supports were enacted. Those hands-on roles are outlined below in order of the number of times they were provided. The total number of supports offered is inflated because a number of grandparents offered more than one kind of support.

Six types of hands- on support identified in the survey were:

- Childcare while parents attend social occasions
- Childcare while parents are working
- Emergency or back-up childcare
- Child rearing 24/7
- Other non-caring ways of interacting with grandchildren
- Shared caring arrangements



The graph left illustrates the number of grandparents providing each type of hands-on support. Shared caring arrangements are emerging as an accepted role.

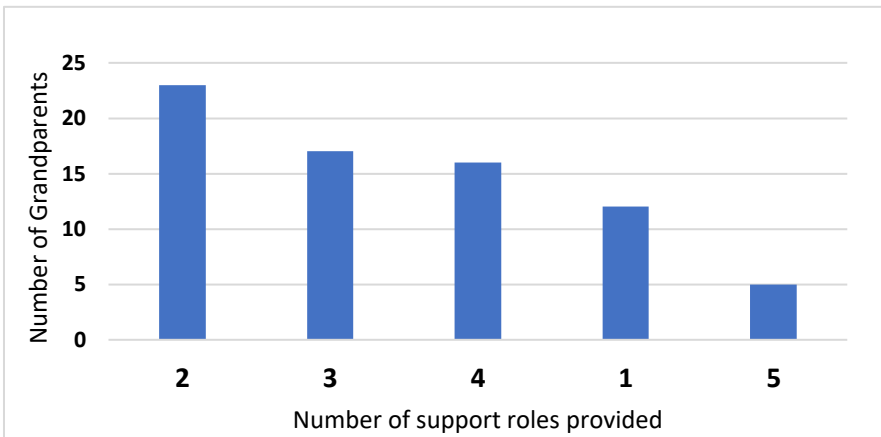
#### 4.3 Multiple hands on supports at any one time

**61 of the 73 grandparents who have a hands-on relationship with their grandchildren fulfilled more than one of the hands-on supporting roles at the one time.**

Each support offered represents a significant investment of time, on top of the grandparents’ contributions to the community in the work force or volunteering. The most demanding combinations were reported by the five grandparents, all kinship carers, who reported undertaking four hands on roles for other grandchildren in addition to their kinship caring responsibilities. Seven further kinship carers reported taking on three additional hands-on roles for other grandchildren.

Number of roles played	Number of grandparents
2	23
3	17
4	16
5	5

The following graph illustrates the number of different types of hands-on supports provided by individual grandparents. For example, 23 grandparents provided two types of hands-on support, while five grandparents provided five.



The most common combination of roles was that of caring for children during both working hours and social events, combined with grandparents making themselves available to offer emergency care where required.

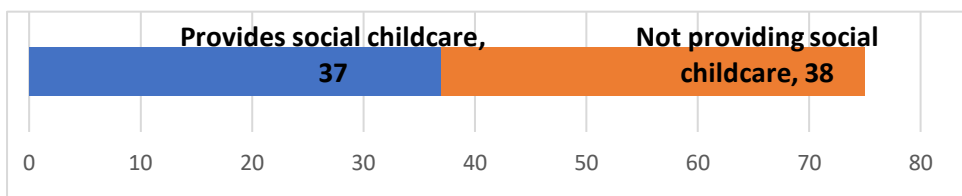
Age range	# of grandparents
45-49	4
50-54	5
55-59	4
60-64	12
65-69	14
70-74	11
75-79	7
80+	4

The table at left outlines the age range of those grandparents who provide 2 or more different types of hands-on support to their families.

It is not surprising to find that the most active age groups fall in the 60-75 range, where grandparents are likely to have more time to spend with their families as they transition out of the workforce.

#### 4.4 Childcare while parents attend social occasions

**37 (49%) of the 75 grandparents in the survey provided occasional childcare while their grandchildren's parents attended social events.**



The majority of grandparents who were providing child care whilst parents were on social occasions offered this support for between 1 and 25 hours per month. This represented a lesser time commitment than childcare during working hours.

# of grandparents	# of hours	Total hours	\$ value @ \$22.98 per hour <sup>2</sup>
7	2-5	23	528.54
8	6-10	64	1470.72
5	11-20	66	1516.68
8	24	192	4412.16
6	48	288	6618.24
1	96	96	2206.08
2	240	480	11030.40
37		1209	27,782.82

The table below details the number of hours per month grandparents provided occasional childcare, and an analysis of the financial value this time represents.

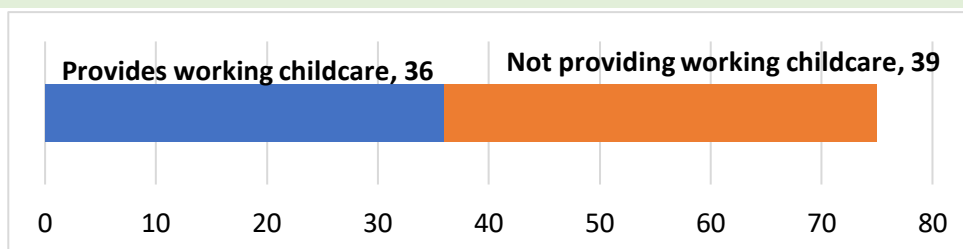
Age range	# of grandparents
45-49	2
50-54	3
55-59	1
60-64	10
65-69	8
70-74	5
75-79	6
80+	2

The table on the left shows the age range of grandparents providing occasional childcare to their grandchildren.

Almost half of respondents offered occasional childcare to their grandchildren on a monthly basis, and all age ranges are represented, even the eighty year olds who were also active in the wider community.

#### 4.5 Childcare while parents are working

**36 of the 75 grandparents in the survey provided childcare while their grandchildren’s parents were working.**



<sup>2</sup> The hourly rate of the cost of childcare used in this report is based on the average hourly babysitting rate in Melbourne in 2022. From the article “What is the average babysitting rate in Australia?” [The average babysitting cost in Australia - 2022 edition \(babysits.com.au\)](https://www.babysits.com.au/)

The table on the left details the number of hours per month grandparents provided childcare while parents are working, and an analysis of the possible financial value this time represents.

# of grandparents	# of hours	Total hours	\$ value @ \$22.98 per hour
6	1-10	50	1149.00
9	11-20	136	3125.28
4	21-30	96	2206.08
6	31-40	224	5147.52
1	41-50	50	1149.00
4	51-75	280	6434.40
4	76-100	388	8916.24
2	101-250	384	8824.32
36		1608	36,951.84

Overall, the grandparents surveyed are providing almost \$37,000 worth of unpaid childcare per month.

For most grandparents this was not more than a few hours a month, but for 11 grandparents, this commitment was upwards of 40 hours per month. A 2014 report by the Australian Government Productivity Commission found that when it comes to childcare during working hours, “Grandparent care is by far the most dominant type of informal care with around 26 per cent of children cared for by their grandparents.”<sup>3</sup> In this report, “informal care” refers to “relatives, friends, nannies, au pairs and babysitters on a paid and unpaid basis.”

Age range	# of grandparents
45-49	3
50-54	2
55-59	2
60-64	10
65-69	4
70-74	7
75-79	5
80+	3
	36

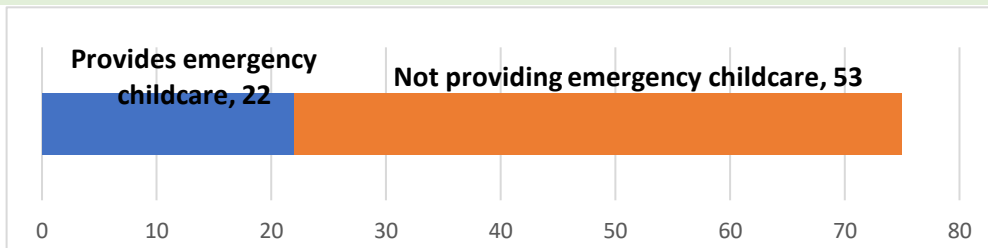
The table on the left demonstrates the age range of grandparents providing childcare during working hours.

The majority of grandparents providing childcare during working hours are in the older age brackets of 60 and above, perhaps because younger grandparents remain in the workforce, many full time, and are therefore less available to provide childcare during working hours.

<sup>3</sup> Childcare and Early Childhood Education: Productivity Commission Inquiry Report Number 1 – October 2014

#### 4.6 Emergency or back-up childcare

**22 of the 75 grandparents in the survey provided emergency care for their grandchildren.**



Five additional grandparents reported that while they were happy to make themselves available for back-up care whenever necessary, this situation was too rare for them to give an average monthly figure.

# of grandparents	# of hours	Total hours	Total \$ value @ \$22.98 per hour
10	2	20	459.60
2	4	8	183.84
1	6	6	137.88
1	8	8	183.34
1	10	10	229.80
2	12	24	551.52
1	16	16	367.68
1	24	24	551.52
1	72	72	1654.56
2	168	336	7721.28
		<b>524</b>	<b>12,041.02</b>

The following table demonstrates the average amount of emergency care provided per month.

The 22 grandparents regularly providing emergency or back-up care are between them providing approximately \$12,000 worth of unpaid babysitting per month.

Age range	# of grandparents
45-49	2
50-54	2
55-59	1
60-64	6
65-69	5
70-74	0
75-79	5
80+	1

The table on the left demonstrates the age range of grandparents who regularly provide emergency or back up care for their grandchildren.

This support role continues to be fulfilled by grandparents, even into their 70s and 80s.

#### 4.7 Child rearing 24/7 (kinship care)

**25 of the 75 grandparents in the survey were kinship carers for one or more of their grandchildren. They were raising 39 grandchildren between them**

# of children	# of grandparents
14	14 are raising 1 child
16	8 are raising 2 children
9	3 are raising 3 children
39	25

The table on the left illustrates the number of children being reared 24/7 by each grandparent.

A total 39 children are being reared 24/7 by 25 grandparents.

A report by the Australian Institute of Family Studies released in 2018 found that it cost low-income families an average of \$170 per week to raise a single child. This figure is a conservative estimate, based on 2014 figures, and is therefore likely to have increased over time. This figure included the costs of food, clothing and footwear, household goods and services, transport, health, personal care, recreation, education, and housing. Increasing this figure in line with the increases in the Consumer Price Index <sup>4</sup>for the years between 2014 and 2021 suggests that the cost of raising a child in 2022 is closer to \$195.13 per week, or \$780.52 per month.

# of grandparents	Total # of children	Total \$ value @ \$780.52 per month
14 are raising 1 child	14	10927.28
8 are raising 2 children	16	12488.32
3 are raising 3 children	9	7024.68
	39	30,440.28

The table to the left demonstrates the cost of raising a child per month.

The figure used here was reached by increasing the estimated cost of raising a child in 2018 in line with the consumer price index up to December 2021.

Age range	# of grandparents
45-49	2
50-54	2
55-59	3
60-64	9
65-69	4
70-74	4
75-79	0
80+	1

The table on the left demonstrates the age range of grandparents providing 24/7 kinship care to their grandchildren.

While most of these grandparents, who are effectively parenting again, are in their 50s and 60s, five of them are continuing their caring role into their 70s and 80s.

<sup>4</sup> [Consumer Price Index, Australia, December 2021 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/consumer-price-index)  
[Consumer price index \(CPI\) rates | Australian Taxation Office \(ato.gov.au\)](https://www.ato.gov.au/consumer-price-index)

#### 4.8 Incidental interactions with grandchildren

**Twelve (16%) of the 75 grandparents in the survey maintained a close relationship with their grandchildren through incidental interactions only.**

Incidental interactions refer to activities such as transporting children, attending kindergarten or school functions, playing with them, and offering advice. These grandparents do not play any other roles in the lives of their grandchildren

Age range	# of grandparents
45-49	0
50-54	0
55-59	0
60-64	1
65-69	1
70-74	3
75-79	4
80+	3

The table on the left demonstrates the age range of grandparents who interact with their grandchildren only in non-caring roles.

These grandparents are all in older age groups, which may be because younger grandparents are still in the workforce, and are therefore less available for support roles such as caring for children during working hours.

It is not possible to calculate the value of these contributions in financial terms from the data collected in this survey.

#### 4.9 Shared caring

**Five of the 75 grandparents in the survey were involved in shared caring arrangements for one or more of their grandchildren. No reasons were given for why these arrangements were in place.**

Age range	# of grandparents
45-49	0
50-54	1
55-59	0
60-64	3
65-69	1
70-74	0
75-79	0
80+	0

Shared caring arrangements in this context are arrangements where the responsibility of caring for a child is split between several members of the family in order to ease the burden of caring.

# of grandparents	# of hours	Total hours	Total \$ value @ \$22.98 per hour
2	12	24	551.52
1	40	40	919.20
2	90	180	4136.40
10		728	5607.12

The table to the left outlines the approximate number of hours of shared caring provided per grandparent and the monthly dollar value of it



#### 4.10 Financial assistance

**23 of the 75 grandparents in the survey provide financial assistance to their family.**

19 grandparents reported that they gave a monthly amount of money, while 4 reported that they gave only occasional “one-off” assistance. The amounts given varied from under \$100 a month, to up to \$1000 a month. One grandparent did not disclose the amount or frequency of money given to their family for personal reasons.

Amount per month	Number of grandparents	Total \$ value
<100	8	545
101-200	5	900
201-300	2	510
301-400	0	0
401-500	0	0
501-1000	3	1900
1000	1	1000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>4,855</b>

The total \$ value of the monetary support provided as outlined in the table below was based on the exact figures provided by grandparents in the survey. The table presents the ranges only in the left hand column for the sake of brevity and easy of reading

The 19 grandparents who provided monthly financial assistance to their families did so in order to assist with the costs of a range of critical expenses. Two grandparents did not disclose the reason for which they provided financial assistance and some reported that there was more than one reason why they provided it. The following table outlines the reasons financial assistance was given in order of the number of times it was listed by the grandparents.

Reasons for financial assistance of family	
Rent and utility bills	13
Food	7
Educational expenses	6
Extracurricular activities	2
Holidays	2
Baby supplies	1
Clothes	1
Medical expenses	1

#### 4.11 The dollar value of the contribution made to families

**Across 64 grandparents who provided supports that can be given a financial value, the overall financial value of the support offered is significant.**

Financial value of support offered		
Type of Support	# of Grandparents providing this support	Total \$ amount per month
Childcare while parents attend social occasions	37	27,782.82
Childcare while parents are working	36	36,951.84
Emergency or back-up childcare	22	12,041.02
Shared caring arrangements	5	5,607.12
Monthly financial contributions	19	4,855.00
Child rearing 24/7	25	30,440.28
		<b>117,678.08</b>

The total financial value of the supports offered by surveyed grandparents undervalued. Bear in mind that much incidental support is critical to families but the grandparents could not assign a number of hours per month to it.

## 5... Grandparents demanding roles

**The combination of supports that grandparents offer to their families places additional responsibilities on them for many years. In addition to continuing to work to provide for their own needs, grandparents also provide their families with additional caring, emotional, educational, and financial supports.**

### 5.1 Balancing work and family

**24 (32%) of the 75 grandparents in the survey were in paid or volunteer work whilst at the same time providing hands on support to their families**

Here are some findings arising from this survey to consider:

- Only one grandparent who remains in the workforce is not also providing hands on support to family.
- The majority of grandparents who were still working also provided, at the same time, two kinds of hands-on support to their families
- Some grandparents in the paid workforce are also volunteering in the wider community in addition to the supports offered to their families.
- Between them, the 74 grandparents who provided family support were contributing approximately \$117,678.08 worth of support to their families per month, consisting of \$4855.00 worth of financial contributions, and \$112,823.08 worth of unpaid childcare.
- Grandparents' financial contributions were used to cover critical expenses, such as rent and utility bills, food, educational expenses, extracurricular activities, holidays, baby supplies, clothes, and medical expenses

### 5.2 Hands on support for a long time to come

**The age range of the grandchildren in the survey tell us that most of the grandparents will continue to provide hands on support for some time to come.**

When looking at the age of the grandchildren at the time of the survey it is clear that 69 of the grandparents in the survey have a minimum of four years remaining until their youngest grandchild turns 18, with the average predicted length of time where supports might still be offered overall being approximately 12 years. Consider that, three grandparents have grandchildren under one year old, with a further 20 reporting that their youngest grandchild was between one and three years old.

Only for three grandparents, is the continuing need to offer hands on supports likely to be of short duration, as their youngest grandchildren are aged between 16 and 18.

Most of the grandparents who were likely to be still providing hands on support for some time to come are of an age where this is possible. All of the grandparents who reported that their youngest grandchild was aged 16 or over are in their 70s or 80s. The majority of the 23 grandparents who reported that their youngest grandchild was still an infant or toddler (aged between 0-3) were in their 50s and 60s, however 3 of these were in their mid-70s.

One further grandparent reported that all of their grandchildren had already reached adulthood.

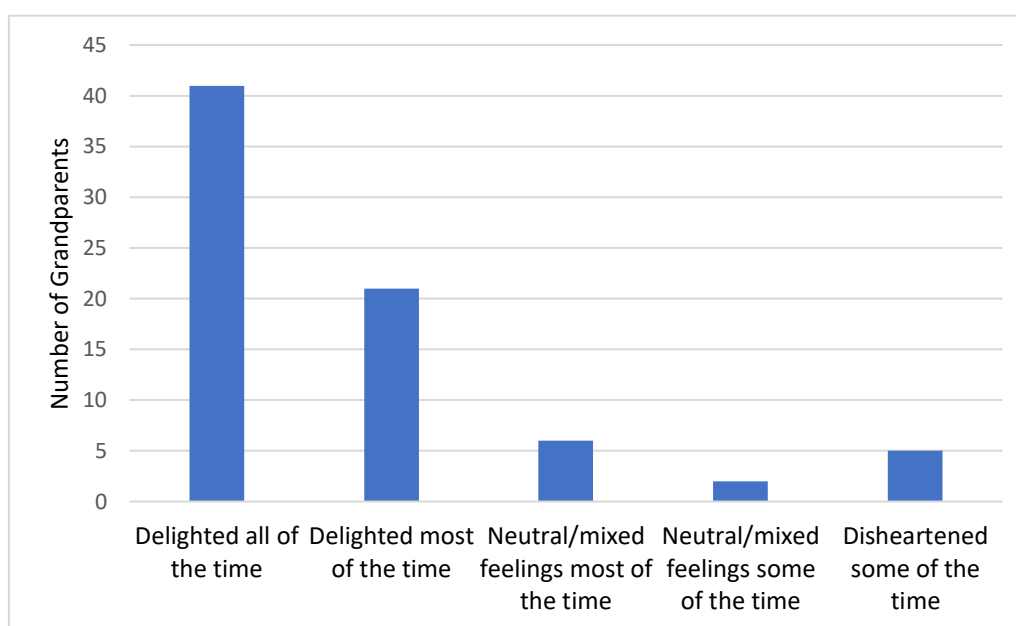
## 6... Grandparents levels of fulfilment in their roles

62 of the 75 grandparents in the survey reported being delighted with their role as a grandparent most or all of the time.

Attitude to roles played	# of respondents
Delighted all of the time	41
Delighted most of the time	21
Neutral/mixed feelings most of the time	6
Neutral/mixed feelings some of the time	2
Disheartened some of the time	5

The Table on the left outlines the levels of satisfaction for all grandparents in the survey.

None of the grandparents reported having overall negative feelings to their role, or feeling “disheartened all of the time”.



### 6.1 Sources of joy

When asked what aspects of grandparenting gave them the most joy, respondents came up responses which fall into three categories:

- **Time spent with them** – sharing holidays, sharing skills, sharing meals, making memories.
- **Watching them grow up** – seeing them happy and healthy, watching them try hard, reaching their goals and achieving more than previous generations
- **Developing a relationship** – watching them laugh, hearing them say “I love you”, hugs and kisses, developing trust

### 6.2 Sources of stress

Grandparents were also asked to reflect on what aspects of their role brought them the most stress. Responses included:

- **Kinship care** – having a parenting relationship with the children, managing relationships with extended family, dealing with bureaucracy, financial concerns, not being allowed to spoil the grandchildren

- **Watching children struggle** – managing challenging behaviours, mental health, bullying, peer pressure, coping with disability
- **Worrying about families** – concern for the grandchildren’s future, worrying about the parents, worrying about success at school, worrying about over use of technology, worrying about children showing lack of respect
- **Lack of contact** – due to families denying them access, distance issues or COVID-19 lockdowns
- **Worrying about themselves** – ageing and needing to provide support beyond their capacity.

### 6.3 Compensation for some

**44 of the 75 grandparents in the survey were receiving some form of recompense for their roles.**

Of these, 21 noted that they received financial assistance from the government, whilst one said that this support came from their family. The 21 grandparents receiving government support are all kinship carers one grandparent receiving financial recompense from their family provides substantial child care

In addition to this, 24 grandparents reported that they receive non-financial recompense in return for their caring roles. While it was not stated in the survey responses who provides this support, or what it was for, it can be stated that this support was provided on behalf of 21 families.

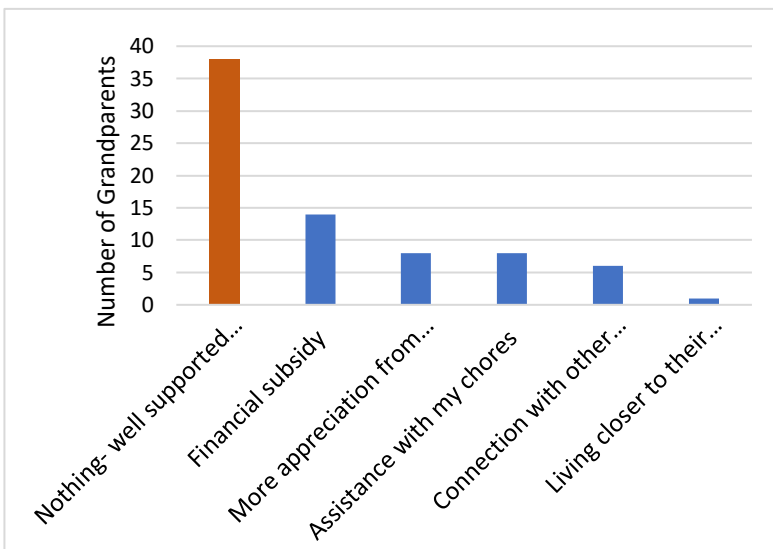
One grandparent receives both financial and non-financial compensation.

### 6.4 Better support for others

**37 grandparents called for more support to enable them to better fulfil their role.**

Supports required	# of grandparents
Financial subsidy needed urgently	14
More appreciation from the family	8
Assistance with my chores	8
Connection with other grandparents in similar roles	6
Living closer to their grandchildren	1

Of the supports requested and outlined the table on the left the call for financial assistance was urgent in some cases.



Of those grandparents who reported that a financial subsidy would help them fulfil their roles:

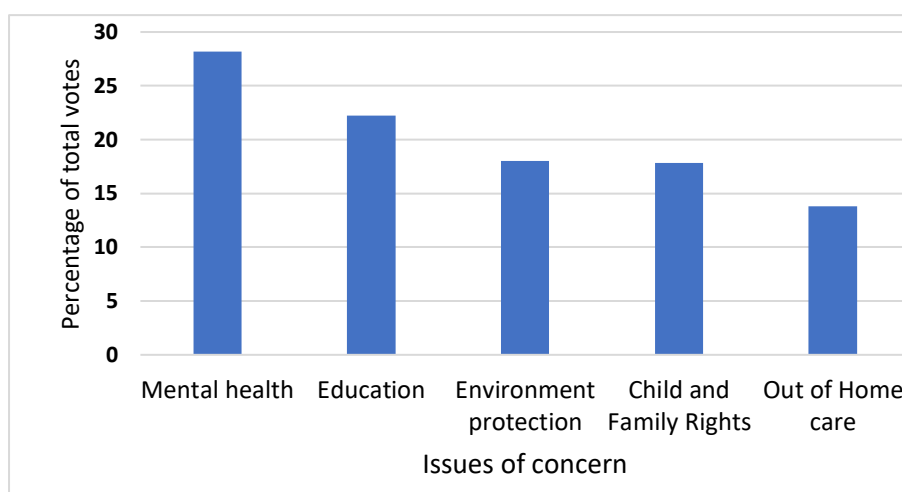
- 10 were kinship carers,
- two provided a significant amount of childcare
- one provided supports to a grandchild with a disability
- one provided assistance with the grandchild’s education.

## 7...Grandparents views about the future

The grandparents were presented with a list of issues that may affect their grandchildren's futures, and asked to add any missing issues to the list and to then identify three issues of most concern to them. The responses were weighted with first preferences given 3 points, second preferences 2 points, and third preferences 1 point. All 75 grandparents answered this question, giving a total of 450 possible points. The resulting issues were:

- General child and family rights (including Indigenous and refugee children)
- Out of home care (especially kinship care)
- Mental health
- Education
- Environment protection (including play)

The following graph shows the final distribution of votes, expressed as a percentage of the total and ranked in descending order of occurrence.



GPV will ensure that these issues are embedded in its future work programs. Indeed, some of them have been in the work program for some time as a result of findings from previous surveys. Education, for example, has been a high priority for grandparents since the very first surveys in 2003.

However, these findings would indicate that a change of emphasis is necessary. For example, the priority given to mental health issues is a relatively recent phenomenon. In previous surveys, grandparents have shown more concern for the physical wellbeing of their grandchildren than their mental wellbeing. Mental health care did not appear as an issue of concern until the 2019 survey on the roles grandparents play.

Environment protection is another issue which has seemingly increased in importance to grandparents in recent years. In earlier GPV surveys this issue was mentioned mostly in the context of ensuring that children had green space to play, and it was not until more recent surveys that the issue of climate change became a factor.

Out of Home Care has been a priority for GPV since grandparents first started raising the issue in 2004. Unsurprisingly this issue is ranked higher by those grandparents who are raising their grandchildren than those who are not.

## 8...Appendices

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### A...The Profile of the respondents

#### **Age and partner status**

The 75 respondents were all grandparents ranging in age from 46 to 85 years old. 64 of them identified as female and 11 as male. 42 respondents (56%) had a partner, while 33 (44%) did not

#### **Geographical Location**

The respondents were drawn from across Victoria. The majority (55%) lived in metropolitan areas whilst 25% lived in provincial towns or regional cities and 20% lived in rural areas.

#### **Ethnic Background**

The majority (66 of 75 or 88%) of respondents reported their ethnic background as Australian. Many linked their ancestry to the British Isles (English, Irish, Scottish, or Welsh). Nine respondents identified with ethnicities other than Australian or British: Pakistani – 5, Indian – 1, Sri Lankan – 1, Dutch – 1 and Italian – 1. Only one of the 75 respondents reported being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait ancestry.

#### **Health of respondents**

Overall, the respondents reported being in good physical health (66 of 75 or 88%) a good deal or all of the time. Very few respondents (8 of 75 or 10%) reported being unwell more than they were well. One respondent did not answer this question. The respondents were also generally enjoying good mental health (70 of 75 or 93%), reporting that they experienced good mental health all or a good deal of the time. Few respondents (5 of 75 or 7%) reported that they experienced poor mental health all or a good deal of the time.

### B...The profile of the grandchildren

The majority of respondents had between one and 10 grandchildren, with seven respondents (11%) reporting that they had more than 10 grandchildren. The highest number of grandchildren in one family was 19.

The ages of the grandchildren ranged from newborn to 39 years of age. 26% of the grandchildren discussed in the survey were aged 18 and over, while the remainder were under 18.

#### **Number of great grandchildren**

Only nine (12%) of respondents reported that they had great grandchildren. Of these, 6 had 1 great grandchild, 2 had 2, and 1 respondent had 3 great grandchildren.

#### **Non-biological relationships**

Survey respondents were asked if they had any grandparent-like relationships with children to whom they were not biologically related. 18 respondents reported that they have these kinds of relationships, with between 1 and 6 children.

#### **Grandchildren with a disability**

29 respondents (39%) reported that one or more of their grandchildren have a disability. For the majority of these respondents only one or two of their grandchildren were affected by disability, while six respondents reported that between three and seven of their grandchildren had a disability.

Many grandparents reported that their role in caring for grandchildren with a disability was minimal, limited to remaining in close contact but otherwise having a fairly normal grandparenting relationship with them. For 14 (48%) of respondents, care of their disabled grandchildren is more extensive, taking full responsibility for them as kinship carers.

C...Table 4 – Value of Occasional Childcare			
# of grandparents	# of hours	Total hours	\$ value @ \$22.98 per hour
3	2	6	137.88
3	4	12	275.76
1	5	5	114.90
2	6	12	275.76
4	8	32	735.36
2	10	20	459.60
4	12	48	1103.04
1	18	18	413.64
8	24	192	4412.16
6	48	288	6618.24
1	96	96	2206.08
2	240	480	11030.40
37		1207	27,782.82

D...Table 6 - Dollar Value of working hours childcare			
# of grandparents	# of hours	Total hours	\$ value @ \$22.98 per hour
1	4	4	91.92
1	6	6	137.88
4	10	40	919.20
4	12	48	1103.04
3	16	48	1103.04
2	20	40	919.20
4	24	96	2206.08
1	32	32	735.36
2	36	72	1654.56
3	40	120	2757.60
1	50	50	1149.00
1	64	64	1470.72
3	72	216	4963.68
3	96	288	6618.24
1	100	100	229.80
1	144	144	3,309.12
1	240	240	5515.20
36		1608	34,883.64

Year	CPI Increase (two different figures taken from ABS and ATO – have used average for estimated cost)	Estimated cost of child rearing per week
2014		170
2015	1.8	173.06
2016	1.4 – 1.6	175.66
2017	1.9 – 2.1	179.17
2018	1.7 – 2.0	182.48
2019	1.8 – 2.1	186.04
2020	1 – 1.1%	187.99
2021	3.5 – 4.1%	195.13



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