



DON'T BE CARELESS.

Tasmanian Carers
deserve
a Carer Recognition
Framework

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1.0 Introduction.

Carers Tasmania is pleased to present this submission to the Tasmanian Government as part of the 2012-13 State Budget Community Consultation process.

Family Carers provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness or who are frail. Carers Tasmania supports such Carers by providing information and resources, counselling, referral to other services, advice, education and training, and peer support.

Family Carers save the Tasmanian Government and community significant costs by providing unpaid support to family members or friends who have a disability, illness or who are frail. Such costs would otherwise be incurred by the Government and community through the provision of full-time professional home care workers, nursing home or hospital-based services.

Family Carers make a significant contribution to the wellbeing and social connectedness of the people for whom they care, as well as contributing to social capital for the wider community. Carers themselves however, are gravely disadvantaged in their ability to participate in society and many require the ongoing support of Carers Tasmania to meet the challenges that come with caring for a family member or friend with a disability, illness or other debilitating condition.

It is time for the Government to recognise the enormous contribution that Family Carers make to Tasmania by implementing a Carers Recognition Framework. Such a Framework would make an important contribution to the social inclusion agenda in Tasmania as well as Tasmania *Together's* Goal 5: Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected.

Carers Tasmania submits the following recommendation for consideration by the Government in preparing the State Budget for 2012-13:

Recommendation

Carers Tasmania recommends that the Government support and work with Carers Tasmania to develop a Carers Recognition Framework for Tasmania which will comprise a Carers Charter, Carers Advisory Council and a Tasmanian Carers Policy (and associated Strategy).

This recommendation and submission has been informed by members of Carers Tasmania, who took part in a consultation process that involved 50 Carers from across Tasmania. The findings of this consultation process can be found in the attached report, *Conversations with Carers* (December 2011).

2.0 About Carers Tasmania.

Carers Tasmania is a non-profit, community based, incorporated association and registered charity dedicated to improving the quality of life of all caring families living in Tasmania.

The *vision* of Carers Tasmania is to achieve recognition of the value and contributions of Carers and endorse caring as a shared whole-of-community responsibility. The *mission* of Carers Tasmania is to enhance the health and wellbeing of Carers in Tasmania, and promote their rights and needs.

We are dedicated to improving the quality of life of unpaid Carers. We are committed to consulting with Carers to identify and respond to their needs. Carers Tasmania provides a diversity of services across all areas of the state, including counselling, information, education and training, health and wellbeing support, and social support. Carers Tasmania has a strong focus on rural and remote regions embedded in all program design and development. Carers with diverse needs, such as young Carers, Aboriginal Carers and Carers from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds can access specialist support services especially designed to better meet their needs.

Carers Tasmania is governed by a volunteer board of directors which oversees the strategic, financial and legal direction of the organisation. Members of the Board contribute professional expertise and/or offer perspectives drawn from their own experiences.

The key objectives of the organisation are to:

- Provide quality Carer-focused services
- Encourage awareness and community support for Carers
- Advocate on behalf of Carers to government and other stakeholders about identified Carer concerns and options for solutions
- Operate a progressive, sustainable, accountable and transparent organisation
- Be recognised as a leader in the provision of support to Carers.



The vision of Carers Tasmania is to achieve recognition of the value and contributions of Carers and endorse caring as a shared whole-of-community responsibility.

3.0 The Recommendation.

Recommendation

Cares Tasmania recommends that the Government support and work with Carers Tasmania to develop a Carers Recognition Framework for Tasmania which will comprise a Carers Charter, Carers Advisory Council and a Tasmanian Carers Policy (and associated Strategy).

A Carers Recognition Framework for Tasmania is well over due. Tasmania is the only Australian state/territory that does not formally recognise Carers, apart from Victoria. The development of a Carers Recognition Framework with the introduction of a Carers Charter, Carers Advisory Council and Carers Policy, is an essential step in ensuring the growing number of Carers in Tasmania are duly recognised and supported in their role.

The State Government is reminded that by 2028, the number of people in Tasmania requiring assistance with a core activity of daily life such as communication, mobility or self care is projected to increase by 47-52%.¹ This will lead to a total of 34-37,000 extra people who require care by 2028 and an increase in the number of Family Carers to 80-88,000 by 2028.¹

A Carer is an individual who provides, in a non-contractual and unpaid capacity, ongoing personal care, support and assistance to people with a disability, medical condition (including terminal or chronic illness), mental illness or frailty due to age.



¹ IMC-Link (2008), *Report on the profile of Carers in Tasmania*, Carers Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania.

Carers deserve to be recognised for the enormous contribution they make to our society. Provision of unpaid care makes a significant contribution to the Tasmanian economy. A Tasmanian study on the profile of Family Carers has shown that the total replacement cost of care, at current carer levels, was calculated at a gross cost of over \$18 million per week or \$961 million per year.² The total gross replacement cost of care, at projected 2028 carer levels, was calculated at over \$21 million per week or over \$1.1 billion per year.²

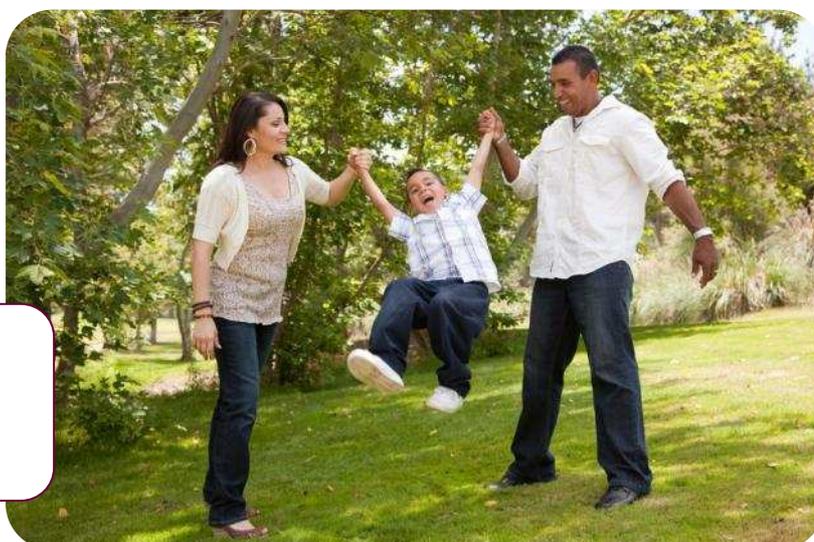
Tasmania already has *A Social Inclusion Strategy* which lays the foundation for a Tasmania in which everyone should have access to the resources and relations that make life healthy, happy and productive. The proposal presented in this submission will enable the Government to progress its commitment to social inclusion. It will provide Tasmanian Carers with greater opportunities, support and respect. It will enable their needs to be recognised and systems improved to enable them to continue to contribute to our economy and to be part of the social fabric of our community. It will reduce stigma and discrimination and give Carers a stronger voice.

As mentioned earlier, all other states and territories in Australia (with the exception of Victoria) currently have Carers recognition legislation. In addition, the Australian Government has a Carer Recognition Act and a National Carer Strategy. Tasmania is lagging behind in recognising the invaluable contributions of Carers to the community.

The lack of a whole-of-government approach to recognising and supporting Carers in Tasmania to date has resulted in:

- Lack of recognition of Carers, their role and needs by the community and the Government
- Lack of consultation and engagement with Carers on decisions that affect their lives and roles
- Discrimination and lack of opportunities for Carers
- A significant variation in the response to Carers needs, including overlapping in funding programs
- Gaps in services
- Difficulty in measuring the effectiveness of the system as a whole
- Difficulties in accessing timely information
- Lack of vision for the future of Carers in Tasmania

Tasmania is lagging behind in recognising the invaluable contributions of Carers to the community.



The purpose of introducing a Carer Recognition Framework in Tasmania would be to:

- Recognise and support Carers and their role in the community
- Provide a mechanism for the consideration of Carers' needs and interests
- Introduce a Carers Charter
- Establish a Carers Advisory Council
- Provide for reporting by organisations on activities carried out under the Carers Charter.

The Framework could incorporate a Carers Charter, provide for the establishment of a Carer Advisory Council and be supported by a Tasmanian Carers Policy and Strategy. The Framework, through its policies, could require organisations and its staff to have an awareness and understanding of the Carers Charter and take action to reflect the principles of the Charter in the provision of the relevant services of that organisation. The Framework could also provide a mechanism for organisations to consult with Carers and their representative organisation in policy and program development, or strategic and operational planning where the activity is relevant to Carers and the persons they care for.

Carers deserve to be recognised in the same way that other groups are recognised in Tasmania, for example people with disabilities. The *Disability Framework for Action* – a whole of government framework for Tasmanians with a disability was established out of recognition that *“Along with other Tasmanians, people with disabilities have a right to enjoy a good quality of life and to reach their maximum potential.”*

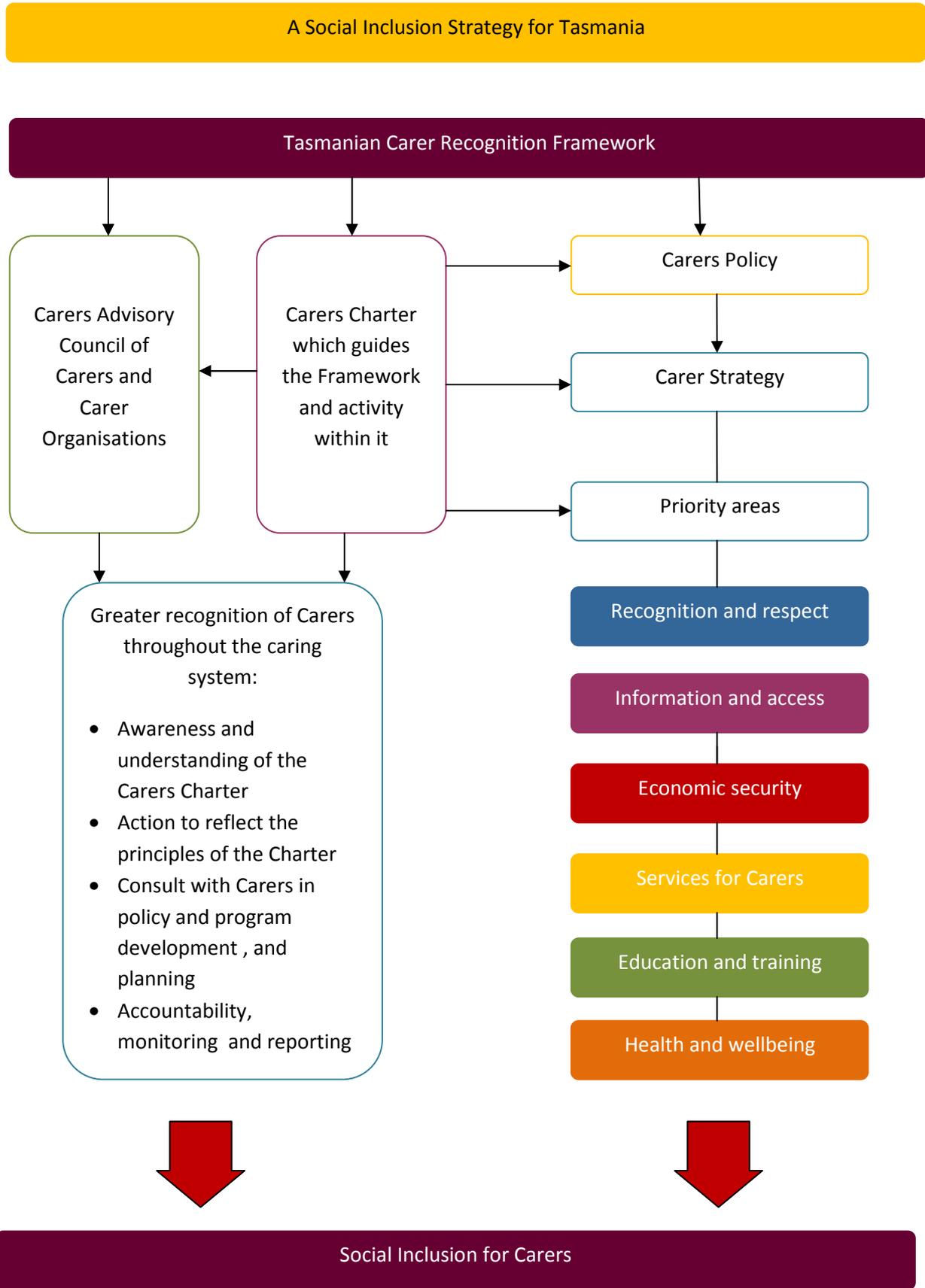
Further the Framework states: *“Considering the needs of people with a disability in the design and delivery of all Government policies, programs, services and facilities will promote the full realisation of personal, social and economic opportunities and contribute to making Tasmania a more inclusive place to live.”* The experience of the Disability Framework for Action provides the Government with a model of how it could also provide recognition for Carers in Tasmania. Over the page we present an overview of the Framework we are proposing in this submission. On the subsequent pages we present further information about each component of the Framework.

The Disability Framework for Action:

- Sets out the Government's vision for Tasmania as an inclusive and caring community
- Applies to all Tasmanian Government agencies
- Provides a direction for action by Government
- Promote leadership across all State Government agencies to institute a 'whole-of-government' approach to policy and planning, service delivery and evaluation.



What might A Carers Recognition Framework look like?



A Carers Charter.

It is proposed that a Carers Charter be developed which sets out core principles for organisations to adopt into practice. Organisations could be asked to report on action taken to reflect the principles of the Carers Charter in the provision of services relevant to Carers and the persons they care for.

Western Australia, South Australia, Northern Territory and Queensland all have 'Charter' based legislation. In Western Australia these organisations include the Department of Health, including public hospitals, disability services, and agencies funded by these agencies, and the Office of Health Review. In South Australia and the Northern Territory, all government departments and agencies, and government funded agencies are required to comply with the Charter. In Queensland the Act binds everyone including the State.

By adopting the principles of the Charter, organisations will improve the health and wellbeing of Carers through:

- A more consistent approach to responding to Carers' needs
- Better coordination between service providers
- A strategic, planned approach to funding and resource allocation
- Participation by Carers at all levels of policy development and services planning
- Greater recognition and support for Carers by the wider community

A Carers Advisory Council.

A Carers Advisory Council could bring together Carers, Carer organisations as well as government agencies. The functions of the Council could be to:

- Work together to advance the interests of Carers
- Promote the Carers Recognition Framework

What might a Carers Charter look like?*

1. Carers must be treated with respect and dignity.
2. Carers have choices within their caring role.
3. Carers' health and wellbeing are critical to the community.
4. Carers play a critical role in maintaining the fabric of our society.
5. The valuable social and economic contribution that carers make should be recognised and supported.
6. Service providers work in partnership with Carers.
7. Carers in Aboriginal, young, old, Culturally And Linguistically Diverse (CALD), and rural and remote communities need specific consideration.
8. All children and young people have the right to enjoy life and reach their potential.
9. Resources are available to provide timely, appropriate and adequate assistance to Carers.

** The above information is based on Charters from other states and are a preliminary suggestion only.*

- Promote the Carers Charter and receive reports from organisations on the implementation of the Charter
- Report to the Minister on matters that will advance the interests of Carers
- Identify priorities for action in the interests of Carers
- Contribute to the development of policies and strategies that will ensure inclusive and effective engagement with Carers from diverse backgrounds across Tasmania.

Again it is worth pointing out the model of the Premier’s Disability Advisory Council, which assists the State Government to implement the Disability Framework for Action. Premier’s Disability Advisory Council members provide advice on government policies and programs that impact on people with disability and work with Government and the broader community to promote the participation of people with disability in community life. Premier’s Disability Advisory Council considers a range of issues for people with disability including access to and participation in:

- education and training
- housing
- employment
- health
- transport
- justice and civic activity
- sport and recreation; and
- the arts.



As stated on the Council’s webpage, Premier’s Disability Advisory Council’s work program over the next two years will include:

- Contribution to the review of the Disability Framework for Action and advice on future directions for whole-of-government disability policy
- Monitoring the Government’s performance in relation to the implementation of disability policy; and
- Advising the Government on strategic priorities to increase the participation of people with disability.

Tasmania does not currently have a peak body for Carers. Carers Tasmania believes that it is critical that we develop a Framework that enables it to genuinely listen to and feedback to Carers and their organisations in Tasmania in a coordinated way. The establishment of a Carers Advisory Council could enable this to happen.

Carers Advisory Councils exist in Queensland and Western Australia, where 10 members are appointed by the Minister. In Queensland, 3 members must be Carers, 3 members must be representatives of Carers Associations and 4 members must be public sector employees. One advantage of the relatively slow progress on Carer recognition in Tasmania is that we can learn from the effectiveness of legislation in other states and territories.

A Carers Policy and Strategy.

A Carers Policy could provide a mechanism for putting a Carers Charter into action. It could provide direction to organisations in providing services where Carers are involved and in making decisions that implicate Carers. It could provide a clear framework for adopting the principles in the Carers Charter and outline the role of government, the community, service providers and Carers in relation to the Carers Recognition Framework.

A Carers Strategy could outline the actions that will be taken under key priority areas such as those recognised by the Australian Government:

- Recognition and respect
- Information and access
- Economic security
- Services for Carers
- Education and training
- Health and wellbeing

Organisations and Departments that could be involved.

Carers Tasmania requests that the Government invest in Carers Tasmania to undertake the development work for a Carers Recognition Framework. Carers Tasmania proposes that it would:

- Work with the Government to undertake the necessary background work for the development of the Carers Recognition Framework.
- Undertake consultation processes with key stakeholders to inform the development of the Carers Charter, Carers Policy and associated Strategy.
- Work with relevant Government agencies to establish a Carers Advisory Council.
- Provide ongoing secretarial support to the Carers Advisory Council.

Carers Tasmania believes that the development and implementation of A Carers Recognition Framework would require a cross-agency approach, particularly involving the following departments:

- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Justice
- Department of Economic Development
- Department of Education

Funding.

Carers Tasmania seeks the following budgetary allocations (plus CPI) for the development and implementation of a Carers Recognition Framework:

2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000

