

Tasmanian Carer Policy

2016

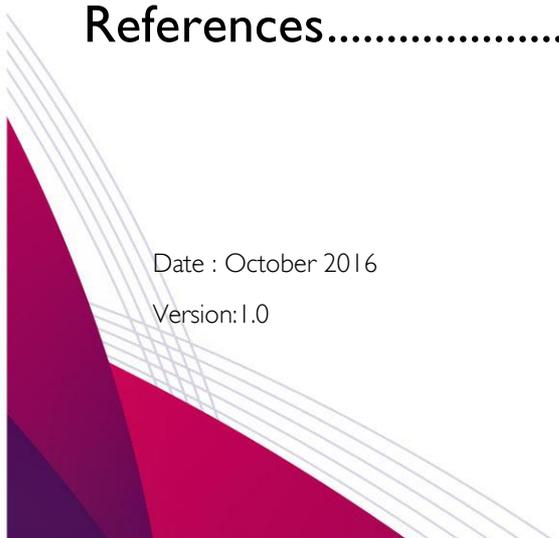


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PREMIER'S MESSAGE



Carers play a vital role in the Tasmanian community. The Tasmanian Government is committed to supporting Tasmanian carers through the implementation of the Tasmanian Carer Policy and the Government's support for Carers Tasmania, the peak body for carers in Tasmania.

This Policy was originally released in 2013, and with its Action Plan, has formed the framework for how the Government responds to and engages with carer issues.

Since the inception of the Policy and Action Plan, Tasmanian Government agencies have made significant progress in promoting carer awareness, supporting employees with caring responsibilities, and engaging carers in the development of relevant policies, programs and services.

In this period, we have also seen social services sector reforms such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme, My Aged Care and changes in the mental health sector, that have changed the landscape for Tasmania's carers and those for whom they provide care.

I am pleased to release this refreshed Policy, which reflects the current policy environment and contemporary issues and challenges facing Tasmanian carers.

In 2017, we will work with carers, Tasmanian Government agencies and the community sector to develop a new Action Plan that outlines the actions we will take to implement this Policy.

I acknowledge the work and commitment of the Tasmanian Carers Advisory Council in supporting agencies to implement the Policy and Action Plan and increasing awareness of carers and carer issues.

I look forward to continuing to work with Carers Tasmania and the broader carer community to improve the lives of Tasmanian Carers.

Will Hodgman MP
Premier

INTRODUCTION

Carers play a vital role in our community, but many of us are not aware of the enormous contribution they make to society, or fully appreciate the challenges they face every day.

Carers are not a homogenous group of people – their age group can range from young children through to older persons; they come from a diverse range of linguistic, cultural, sexually diverse and socio-economic backgrounds; and commence or end their caring role at various stages of their life.

The commitment of time and the activities that fall within a caring role are different for each carer, as the support needs of people receiving care vary widely. The nature of the caring role can also change and intensify over time. For example, while some carers provide assistance with tasks such as home maintenance and transport, others will be required to provide 24-hour supervision and assistance with the most basic activities of daily living such as personal care and feeding. A family member supporting someone with mental illness could also experience extremely intense periods of caring, due to the episodic nature of some mental health conditions.



The needs of young carers (under the age of 25) are quite different to adult carers. Many young carers assume an adult level of responsibility, and their caring role can significantly impact on their education, training, employment and social development.

Additional demand for carers can be anticipated as the rate of disability and frailty increases with an ageing population and the incidence of children born with severe disabilities increases¹. Australian Government aged care reforms are encouraging and enabling people to live longer in private dwellings rather than in residential care, which is likely to mean an increased role for carers.

Concurrently, Australian Government initiatives are seeking to decrease welfare dependency and increase workforce participation.

These factors combined will lead to a greater number of carers in the workforce and a need for employers across all sectors to create care-friendly workplaces and provisions. This is an area of priority focus for Carers Australia² and the Tasmanian Government will continue to work closely with Carers Tasmania to ensure that, as an employer, the Tasmanian State Service leads by example in supporting employees with caring responsibilities.

Carers report that caring for their loved ones can be rewarding and satisfying. However, there is a personal cost in assuming a caring role. Carers are significantly worse off than the general population in regards to income, health and wellbeing, employment and social interactions. Carers

¹ DHHS (2006) Review of Disability Services Issues Paper cited by KPMG (2008), Review of Tasmanian Disability Services – Final Report, p 20

² <http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/work-and-care/>

living in regional and rural areas can experience additional difficulties in accessing basic supports and services.



It is important to recognise and understand carers' needs and provide appropriate and relevant support to enable people to continue to provide home-based caring in the community.

The Tasmanian Carer Policy (the Carer Policy) will assist in continuing to raise awareness of the important and critical role of carers; promote better understanding of the issues faced by carers in their caring role; and provide the framework for government

actions to identify carers and deliver support and services they need.

The Carer Policy will ensure that carers are given the opportunity to be involved in decisions that affect them and to contribute to improving the care support system by using their unique and direct experience in providing care for their loved ones.

DEFINITION OF CARER

For the purposes of this Policy:

1. A carer is a person who provides, in a non-contractual and unpaid capacity, ongoing care or assistance to another person who, because of a disability, aging conditions such as frailty, mental illness, chronic illness or pain, requires assistance with everyday tasks.
2. Also, a grandparent is a carer of his or her grandchild if –
 - a) the child lives with the grandparent; and
 - b) the grandparent is the primary caregiver and decision maker for the child.
3. However, if a child's parent or parents remain the primary caregivers and decision makers for the child, the child's grandparent is not the child's carer only because –
 - a) the grandparent cares for the child while the child's parent or parents are working; or
 - b) the child, together with the child's parents, lives with the grandparent.
4. For the purpose of this Policy, a person is not a carer -
 - a) simply because they are the spouse, parent, guardian or relative of a person who requires care; or
 - b) if the person provides the care or assistance as a volunteer for a voluntary organisation³.

CARERS – A STATISTICAL PROFILE

1.1 The National Experience

In 2015, more than one in eight Australians (2.86 million people) were estimated to be providing care to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness and the frail aged⁴.

Since 2010, there has been an increase in the number of primary carers (those who have the main role in providing formal care) and a decrease in the number of non-primary carers⁵.

Data from the most recently published Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey on Disability, Ageing and Carers (2012)⁶ shows that:

³ The definition of a carer for this Policy has been based largely on the Queensland Carers (Recognition) Act 2008

⁴ Access Economics (June 2015), The Economic Value of Informal Care in 2015. p (ii)

⁵ Ibid

⁶ ABS (2012) Disability, Ageing and Carers Australia; Summary of Findings Data Cube 44300do003.

- 56.1 per cent of carers are women (most commonly aged between 25 and 64 years⁷).
- 11.4 per cent of carers are under the age of 25.
- 21.5 per cent of carers are 65 years or older.
- Over 32 per cent of carers have a disability themselves.
- More than one-quarter of all carers are of prime working age (aged 25 to 44 years old).
- 31.9 per cent of carers aged 15 years and over are employed fulltime, compared with 45.7 per cent of non-carers aged 15 years and over.
- The median gross income for a carer per week is \$454 which is \$146 less than the median for non-carers (\$600 per week).

Research by Access Economics⁸ explored the economic value provided by carers and found that:

- Carers in Australia provided an estimated total of 1.9 billion hours of care in 2015, which equates to each carer providing roughly 13 hours per week. This is a considerable increase from the 2010 total of 1.32 billion hours of care.
- Almost 40 per cent of primary carers spend more than 40 hours caring each week⁹.
- If informal carers were to be replaced by carers employed by the formal sector, it would cost an estimated \$31.36 per carer, per hour¹⁰.
- If all hours of care in 2015 were replaced with formal care providers, the replacement value would be \$60.3 billion¹¹ (an increase on the 2010 value of \$40.9 billion) which is equivalent to 3.8 per cent of Australia's Gross Domestic Product or 60 per cent of the health and social work industry.
- Carers, particularly primary carers, are more likely to live in low-income households and to have lower rates of fulltime employment – almost one quarter of primary carers reported a decrease in their income as a result of their caring role¹².

1.2 The Tasmanian Experience

Tasmania has approximately 73 800 carers, which represents almost 13 per cent of the Tasmanian population. This is the highest per capita rate of carers of all the states and territories¹³.

According to the ABS:

- Approximately 43 per cent of Tasmanian carers are male and 57 per cent are female¹⁴.
- 12.2 per cent of Tasmanian carers are under the age of 25¹⁵.

7 Access Economics (June 2015), The Economic Value of Informal Care in 2015. p (ii)

8 Access Economics (June 2015), The Economic Value of Informal Care in 2015. p (iii)

9 Access Economics (June 2015), The Economic Value of Informal Care in 2015. p 6

10 Access Economics (June 2015), The Economic Value of Informal Care in 2015. p 14

11 Ibid

12 Access Economics (June 2015), The Economic Value of Informal Care in 2015. p 8-10

13 ABS(2012) Disability, Ageing and Carers Australia: Summary of Findings Data Cube 44300do003.

14 ABS (2012) Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Tasmania 2012 Data Cube 443300do006

15 Ibid

- Almost 23 per cent of Tasmanian carers are 65 years or older¹⁶.
- 22.5 per cent of Tasmanian carers are of prime working age (aged 25 to 44 years old).¹⁷
- Almost 40 per cent of Tasmanian carers reported having a disability, compared with 21 per cent of the non-carer Tasmanian population. For primary carers, this increases to 48.1 per cent¹⁸.
- Tasmanian carers and non-carers have similar rates for attaining Certificates, Advanced diplomas, Bachelor degrees or above, however, only 46.3 per cent of carers are employed (either part-time or fulltime) compared to over 60 per cent of non-carers¹⁹.
- On average, Tasmanian carers earn approximately \$100 less per week than their non-carer counterparts²⁰.

Carers Tasmania reports that caring in Tasmania is complicated by a number of factors including²¹:

- small and dispersed population centres - over three times as many Tasmanians live outside of metropolitan or inner regional areas compared to other jurisdictions;
- lower socio-economic levels;
- reduced access to health care;
- a lack of social services infrastructure in rural/regional areas; and
- the ageing population – Tasmania has the oldest median age of all the jurisdictions (41.9 in 2015) and there are some regions, such as Triabunna-Bicheno, where almost one-third of the population is aged 65 years and older²².

1.3 Looking forward

In the next ten years, it is predicted that the demand for carers will be significantly higher than the supply²³. This will be influenced by many factors including:

- an ageing population;
- growing duration and complexity of caregiving responsibilities;
- people becoming less inclined to reduce paid employment; and
- increasing rates of women participating in the paid labour force²⁴.

Tasmania has the fastest ageing population in Australia. From 2010 to 2015, the proportion of Tasmania's population aged 65 years and above increased from 16 per cent to 18 per cent²⁵. The Government's commitment to improving the health of all Tasmanians, and supporting and promoting positive and active

16 Ibid

17 Ibid

18 Ibid

19 Ibid

20 ABS (2012) Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Tasmania 2012 Data Cube 443300do006

21 Carers Tasmania (April 2011), Disability Care and Support in Tasmania, p 6

22 ABS (2015) Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia 3235.0

23 Access Economics (June 2015), The Economic Value of Informal Care in 2015. p 8-10

24 Access Economics (June 2015), The Economic Value of Informal Care in 2015. p 8-10

25 ABS (2015) Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia 3235.0

ageing, will help carers of all ages to remain healthy and engaged in their communities while undertaking caring responsibilities.

Table 1: Caring in Tasmania – A National Comparison using 2012 data²⁶

Category (per capita)	Tasmania	Australia
Estimated number of carers	14.7 per cent (73 800 carers)	11.9 per cent (2.695 million carers)
Workforce participation rate:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All carers • Primary carers 	45.0 per cent 40.1 per cent	50.9 per cent 38.4 per cent

Table 2: Population Age – 2015 ABS data²⁷

Category	Tasmania	Australia
Median population age	41.9 years	37.4 years
Proportion of population aged 65+	18 per cent	15 per cent

Table 3: Projected Population Age - 2028 Series B²⁸

Category	Tasmania	Australia
Median population age	43.3 years	39.8 years
Proportion of population aged 65+	24.0 per cent	19.3 per cent

26 ABS (2012) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers

27 ABS (2015) Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia 3235.0

28 ABS (2008) Population Projections, Australia, 2006 to 2101 Cat No 3222.0

POLICY AIMS

The Carer Policy aims to recognise the commitment of Tasmanian carers and support them in their caring role as well as supporting active participation in economic, social and community life for themselves and the people for whom they care.

In delivering the Carer Policy, the Tasmanian Government acknowledges the invaluable role played by carers, recognises them as individuals in their own right, and respects them as key partners in the care support team.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Carer Policy are to:

1. Increase the level of recognition of carers.
2. Improve the level of support and services to carers.
3. Involve carers in the development and evaluation of policies, programs and services that affect them and their caring role.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

The Principles underpinning this Policy are as follows:

1. Carers are to be acknowledged and treated as individuals with their own needs within and beyond their caring role.
2. Carers are to be acknowledged as a diverse group of people, coming from all walks of life and life stages.
3. Carers are to be provided with relevant information and referred to appropriate services to assist them in their caring role.
4. Carers are to be respected as valued members of a care team.
5. Carers expertise and experience are recognised and used in the development and evaluation of policies, programs and services that affect them and the people receiving care.
6. The development, evaluation and delivery of policies, programs and services for carers are to take into account carers' age, gender identity, sexual orientation, cultural and linguistic background, abilities, religion, geographical location and socio-economic status.
7. To the extent possible, carers are to be supported to enjoy optimum health, social and economic wellbeing, and access to educational and employment opportunities.
8. The carer and the person receiving care are to be regarded as a partnership, in which each person has rights and responsibilities.

9. Complaints by carers on decisions and services that affect them and their caring role are to be resolved promptly and without any fear of reprisal.
10. Government agencies are to be given appropriate support to understand and respond to the needs of carers.

POLICY SCOPE

All Tasmanian Government agencies and their agents, including Government Business Enterprises and State Owned Corporations, have responsibility for implementing the Carer Policy.

All Tasmanian Government agencies are to take all practicable measures to ensure that its employees and agents have an awareness and understanding of this Policy.

Tasmanian Government agencies involved in providing care support are to take all practicable measures to ensure that they and their agents reflect the Carer Policy Principles in the development, delivery and evaluation of policies, programs and services.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Policy Context

This is a period of significant reform at a national level in health and human services. Reforms in the delivery of aged care, disability and mental health services will continue to have significant impacts for carers, as will potential changes to Australian Government payments and associated initiatives that aim to decrease welfare dependency and increase workforce participation.



A 10 year program of reform in the aged care sector commenced in 2012/13 and will continue through to 2022. It has a focus on increasing choice and control for consumers while ensuring a sustainable and affordable aged care system. A key element of the next stage of reform through My Aged Care will be the development of a single quality framework that will increase the focus on positive outcomes for consumers.

Transition to full-scheme National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has commenced and will continue until

mid-2019, when approximately

10 600 Tasmanians with disability are expected to be part of the Scheme.

In 2015 the Australian Government announced a system-wide reform package for the mental health system, including changes to the way mental health services may be funded through the Primary Health Network and subsequently delivered in the community. These changes will occur over three years from 2016/17.

A clear direction in all of these reforms is a shift to consumer-directed care. Consumer-directed care means that service users are funded to personally select their own supports rather than funding going directly to community service organisations. For service users, while there are opportunities to have greater control over their options, there may be additional pressures in exercising those choices, accessing new systems, and managing funding. The role of the carer will be vital in helping those they care for to navigate these new models.

The Australian Government is also reviewing the way in which it delivers services to carers. It has committed to develop an Integrated Plan for Carer Support Services in order to streamline and better coordinate carer support services. The first step in the Plan was the development of the Carer Gateway, including a national phone service, website and service finder.

Stage two is a co-design process for the development of an integrated carer support service. The vision for the new service proposes a shift towards a preventative model by raising awareness and focusing on delivery of services which are proven to have longer term outcomes for carers.

The Australian Government has also committed to establishing a new Disability and Carers Industry Advisory Council which will provide advice and recommendations to the Government on proposed legislation or policies affecting the national disability and carer sector. The Council will help drive the implementation of the National Disability Strategy and the full roll-out of the NDIS.

Tasmanian Policy Context

The Tasmanian Government is committed to creating a community and culture where carers have access to the services and support they need and have opportunities to maximise their participation in all areas of life. The Government is implementing a number of key reforms, and programs, services and policies that may shape outcomes for carers, including:

- Reforms to the health system
- Reforms to the mental health system
- Reforms to the child protection system
- The Healthy Tasmania Five Year Strategic Plan
- The Affordable Housing Strategy
- The Joined Up Human Services Project
- New initiatives and programs for students with disability
- The development of an Active Ageing Strategy for Tasmania
- The development of a Transport Access Strategy

The Government will work with carers, Carers Tasmania and the non-government sector, as appropriate, in the development and implementation of these and other relevant initiatives to ensure that carers' voices are heard and reflected, and opportunities to improve the lives of carers are identified.

As an employer, the Tasmanian State Service will continue to support employees with caring responsibilities through flexible work practices, leave entitlements, access to support and educating employees on carer rights and issues. The release of the Workplace Diversity Framework in 2016 and the increased focus of heads of Tasmanian Government agencies on embedding more flexibility in employment conditions will assist agencies to continue to promote a carer-friendly culture.

IMPLEMENTATION



This Policy will be implemented through an Action Plan to be developed and released in 2017 and overseen by the Communities, Sport and Recreation Division of the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet will engage with carers, Government agencies, Carers Tasmania and key non-government organisations in the development of the Action Plan.

The Action Plan will include mechanisms for agencies to report on and evaluate progress.

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Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 03 6232 7133

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