

Guide to the NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010

The **NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010** (the Act) recognises the valuable role and contribution of carers in NSW.

There are approximately 905,000 family members, friends and neighbours in NSW who provide unpaid care and support to another person because of disability, chronic illness, mental illness, dementia or ageing.

The Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) leads implementation of the Act.

The Act was reviewed in 2016, with minor amendments assented in June 2017.

Key features of the NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010

NSW Carers Charter

The Charter is set out in Schedule 1 of the Act and on the back of this fact sheet. It contains 13 principles that provide guidance on issues of significance for carers, including valuing carers contribution, carers health and well-being, respecting diversity and recognising carers as partners in care.

Obligations of public sector agencies

Public sector agencies (including government departments, local councils and other authorities) must make sure that their staff are aware of and understand the NSW Carers Charter. They must also consult with carers or organisations representing carers as appropriate, when developing policies that impact on carers. Public sector agencies must also consider the NSW Carers Charter when developing internal human resource policies that may affect the carers in their workforce.

In addition, public sector agencies that provide services for carers or the people they care for (human service agencies) must reflect the Carers Charter principles in service delivery. They must also report their compliance with the Act in their annual report. FACS will then compile a report on Act compliance for the Minister for Disability Services on an annual basis.

NSW Carers Advisory Council

The Act established the NSW Carers Advisory Council (the Council) to advance the interests of carers. The Council provides advice to the Minister for Disability Services on legislation and policy matters relating to carers. The majority of Council members are carers. Information about the Council's role and members can be found online at www.facs.nsw.gov.au/reforms/carers/nsw_carers_advisory_council

The NSW Carers Charter

Schedule 1 of the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010

1 Carers make a valuable contribution to the community

- a. NSW recognises the valuable social and economic contribution that carers make to the community.
- b. Carers should have the same rights, choices and opportunities as other Australians.
- c. Carers' unique knowledge and experience should be acknowledged and recognised.
- d. The relationship between carers and the people they care for should be respected.

2 Carers' health and well-being is important

- a. Carers should be supported to enjoy optimum health and well-being and to participate in family, social and community life, employment and education.
- b. Carers should be supported to balance their caring role with other roles, such as work and education.

3 Carers are diverse and have individual needs within and beyond their caring role

- a. The diverse needs of carers should be acknowledged and recognised in policy, programs and service delivery, taking into consideration culture and language, age, disability, religion, socio-economic status, place of residence, gender identity and sexual orientation.
- b. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values, heritage and concepts of caring should be respected and valued.
- c. The additional challenges faced by carers who live in rural and remote areas should be acknowledged and recognised.
- d. Children and young people who are carers should be supported to reach their full potential.

4 Carers are partners in care

- a. The choices, views and needs of carers and of the people they care for should be taken into account in the assessment, planning, delivery and review of services provided to the people they care for.
- b. Carers should be referred to, and assisted to access appropriate supports and services.
- c. Support for carers should be timely, responsive, appropriate and accessible.

More information on the Act

More information on the Act, including posters and guidelines can be found at www.facs.nsw.gov.au/carersact or by emailing nswcarersact@facs.nsw.gov.au.