



NSW Government Human Service Agency compliance with the Carers (Recognition) Act

2016-17 Summary Report



For more information on this report, the NSW Carers Strategy 2014-19 or the NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 please view the Department of Communities and Justice website at facs.nsw.gov.au/inclusion/carers or email CarerStr@facs.nsw.gov.au

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1 Executive Summary

The NSW Government's vision for carers in NSW is that they are supported to participate fully in their own social and economic life. Supporting carers is the responsibility of the community and all levels of government.

The NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 (the Act) was introduced to formally recognise the significant contribution carers make to the people they care for and the community. It provides clear legislative recognition of carers as well as placing obligations on human services agencies to:

- ensure that all of their staff take action to reflect the principles of the NSW Carers Charter
- report on their compliance with the Act in their annual report.

A 2016 review of the Act found that annual reporting is an appropriate mechanism to ensure that the key agencies providing services take responsibility for complying with the Act. This can be seen through Recommendation 2 of the review:

FACS makes arrangements with human service agencies to collate and publish their reports on compliance with the Act (as included in their annual reports). FACS will then provide an annual collated report to the Minister.

To raise the profile of compliance activities, the review proposed that the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) collates and publishes agency compliance statements on its website for easier access. FACS also has to report to the minister.

FACS does this Summary Report in accordance with the Act's recommendation. The report summarises information provided by human service agencies in their annual reports about compliance with the Act in 2016-17.

A detailed collation of all activities reported by these agencies in 2016-17 annual reports is available in **Appendix A**. This report, including its appendices, will be published on the FACS website <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/inclusion/carers/carers-act>

This report includes a snapshot of examples of good practice reported in 2016-17 annual reporting by six NSW Government agencies and departments, and 25 local government areas. There has been a promising range of activities reported in 2016-17 in relation to establishing new projects or expanding existing services to better support carers. There has been an increase in reporting of activities by local government.

It is important to note that this process of reporting relies on human service agencies to capture and publish the activities they have put in place to support carers. It may not be reflective of the breadth of activity being implemented across NSW.

FACS will continue to work with human service agencies to increase the quality of future reporting on compliance with the Act. This includes an increased focus on consultation and liaison with carers, the area where human service agencies have reported the least activity.

2 Background

2.1 NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010

The objects of the Act, are to:

- Enact a Carers Charter that recognises the role and contribution of carers to our community and to the people they care for.
- Increase awareness of the valuable contribution that carers make to our community.

The Act places specific obligations on NSW public sector agencies which includes government departments and local councils, to:

- take reasonable steps to ensure that staff are aware of and understand the NSW Carers Charter
- consult with carers or organisations that represent carers when developing policies that impact on carers
- have regard to the Carers Charter when developing their human resource policies.

The NSW Carers Charter includes 13 principles that affirm the valuable contribution that carers make and provides guidance to agencies on issues of significance for carers. It outlines how carers in NSW should be treated and what must also be considered when developing policies that impact on carers.

2.2 NSW Human Service Agency obligations under the Act

The Act places additional obligations on human service agencies to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the agency, members of staff and agents of the agency take action to reflect the principles of the NSW Carers Charter.

Human service agencies are also required to prepare a report on their compliance with the Act annually to be included in the agency's annual report. This process of annual reporting is an important part of monitoring how the Act is being implemented across NSW.

The FACS is responsible for leading the implementation of the Act throughout the NSW public sector. A range of resources are available on the FACS website <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/inclusion/carers/carers-act> to help guide and support human service agencies in fulfilling these obligations. This includes Implementation Guidelines and an annual reporting template.

2.2.1 Human services agency definition

Human services agencies are defined by the Act as being any public service agency that provides services directed at carers or persons being cared for by carers.

Carers are defined in Section 5 of the Act as a person who provides ongoing personal care, support and assistance to any other individual who needs it. The person needs it as they have a disability, medical condition, mental illness or are frail and aged.

Under the Act, 'human services agencies' are those 'public service agencies' that provide either or both of:

- services directed at persons with disability, a medical condition, a mental illness or are frail and aged
- services directed at people who are carers of the above listed categories of persons.

2.3 Recommendations for the 2016 Statutory Review of the Act

The report of the 2016 statutory review of the Act includes 10 recommendations focused on improving outcomes for carers via increased education about the Act. As well as other legal and policy initiatives to support carers in NSW.

The review found that annual reports are an appropriate mechanism for human service agencies, and other key agencies who provide services to carers, to report on their service provision to carers.

It also found that there is limited awareness of the activities undertaken by human services agencies under the Act.

It is recommended that to raise the profile of compliance activities, FACS needs to collate and publish agency compliance statements on its website for easier access and provide a report to the Minister (Recommendation 2).



3 Examples of good practice

Human service agencies are asked to use an annual reporting template that is simple and broad. This gives them the opportunity to report on many aspects of their service and the actions they might have undertaken to support carers and to meet their obligations under the Act.

It asks agencies to report on strategies to support carers with particular focus on the following three areas:

- **Initiatives to support carers** – including education strategies to inform staff and raise awareness about carers, the NSW Carers Charter or to improve the way they interact with carers.
- **Consultation and liaison with carers** – on any policy issues that affect them.
- **Human resources policies and practice** – how the agency supports staff who are carers, including human resource policies and practice.

FACS undertook a desktop review of the information provided by six NSW Government agencies and departments and 25 local governments areas on their reporting on compliance with the Act in their annual reports.

It is promising to see the range and depth of activity to support carers across NSW. Key findings from the review include:

- Most of the activities reported by agencies fell under the area of initiatives to support carers.
- Consultation and liaison with carers is the area where human service agencies report the least, pointing to opportunities to enhance this into the future.
- A considerable increase in the level of activities reported at the local government level such as local initiatives to support carers from the previous reporting period.

3.1 Examples of good practice

A snapshot of good practice examples have been included in this report across the three focus areas.

It is important to note that the examples do not reflect the breadth of activity across all human service agencies but rather what has been reported. It is possible that some agencies are active in carer support but have not reported this.

FACS is implementing the recommendations of the Act review. This will include supporting improved compliance by updating Act implementation guidelines and resources as well as improving information about compliance reporting requirements.

3.1.1 Initiatives to support carers

3.1.1.1 Koori Yarning Group

Based in Dubbo, is a place where Aboriginal Carers can go for some time out, to have a cuppa, talk to someone in a similar situation and gain some helpful information to support them in the caring role.

The group has guest speakers who come and talk about issues that support members in their caring role, as well as going on excursions as a way to acknowledge and thank members for their hard work. Information on carer support services was made available to promote trust, awareness and confidence for carers.

The initiative is supported by Western NSW Local Health District and partners, and was recognised in 2016 with a NSW Carers Award in the carer support group category.

3.1.1.2 Local council initiatives

Using existing services in innovative ways to support and include carers, such as:

- providing carers free use of pools and other facilities (Randwick City Council)
- referral and information services to connect community members, including carers to local services (Hornsby Shire Council)
- support carers by accepting the NSW Companion Card at all of its venues (Camden Council).

3.1.1.3 The Caring for Our carers trial program (Western Sydney Local Health District)

Developed after patients requested that carers be allowed to stay in hospital while providing support.

The trial includes 40 specially modified single rooms in the new Clinical Services Building at Blacktown Hospital. Rooms include a sofa bed that offered a comfortable place to sleep for the carer. This enables them to leave hospital well-rested and ready to continue providing care when the patient was discharged.

The initiative was developed to help patients in more NSW hospitals, including new facilities for Stage 2 at Blacktown Hospital and as part of the Westmead expansion. It also attracted interest from hundreds of local and overseas health professionals.

3.1.2 Consultation and liaison with carers

3.1.2.1 Review of the Act

Carried out by FACS in 2016-17 and involved statewide consultation with over 800 people and 50 organisations, including many carers.

The consultation process sought feedback on whether the Act has increased awareness of the contributions that carers make to our community. FACS implemented a range of strategies to engage carers and seek their input including running:

- three carer forums in Sydney, Port Macquarie and Wagga Wagga were attended by 53 people, 45 of them being carers
- two informal carer conversation events were led by the Minister for Disability Services with 25 carers in attendance
- Have Your Say online survey.

The views of carers were represented in the final report and was tabled in both Houses of Parliament on 8 November 2016.

3.1.2.2 Staff surveys

Multiple councils reported capturing data on carer responsibilities through staff surveys such as Byron Shire Council, City of Sydney Council and the Inner West Council. Data is captured in relation to employees with caring responsibilities. They use this data to inform human resource planning.

3.1.3 Human resources policies and practice

3.1.3.1 City of Sydney council

Implemented a range of initiatives to create a 'care aware' workplace including working closely with Carers NSW to deliver six carer awareness sessions for managers.

The council implemented key areas of improvement based on outcomes of a staff survey. This included a review of workplace flexibility and policies, better access to information, enhancing learning and development opportunities, and raising awareness through communication and training.

Appendix: A

Human service agency support for carers as detailed in 2016/17 Annual Reports

TAFE NSW

Initiatives to support carers

- TAFE NSW provides flexible delivery and assessment options to allow students to study and undertake assessment at a time and place to suit their personal circumstances.
- TAFE NSW makes personal, career and study counselling services available to students, including those with carers and those who are carers. TAFE NSW employs specialist staff where required, to identify and provide for the needs of students including referral to TAFE NSW and external services and resources.
- TAFE NSW promoted the availability of the Commonwealth Government's Young Carer Bursary Program on websites, the intranet and social media. The aim of the bursary program is to support young carers to remain in or return to education or training, leading to improved employment opportunities.

Consultation with carers

- TAFE NSW is committed to review and prioritise its policies and procedures that support carers and to develop policies that reflect our obligations under the NSW Carer's Charter and the NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 (NSW) in 2017–18.

Human resources policies and practice

- TAFE NSW works within the parameters of the NSW Carers' Charter, respecting carers' relationships with the people they care for, supporting their choices and being mindful of the health and wellbeing of carers. TAFE NSW supports employees who are carers through existing human resource policies including our sick leave, FACS leave, leave without pay and permanent part-time work policies.
- Staff with carer responsibilities were able to access the TAFE NSW Employee Assistance Program, an independent, confidential and free professional counselling service to support the health and wellbeing of employees, flexible and family-friendly work practices.
- TAFE NSW offers flexible work arrangements to help staff balance work and carer responsibilities. Flexible work options include permanent and temporary part-time work, job sharing, leave without pay, flexible working hours, personal carer's leave and short-term leave to attend to family and community responsibilities.
- During 2016–17, up to 3,165 TAFE NSW staff (76 per cent of whom were women) accessed flexible work options. These include up to 2,722 staff taking short-term absences to meet family and community responsibilities.

NSW Department of Education

Initiatives to support carers

- The Department maintains a dedicated page on the internal website with information, online resources and useful links for staff who are carers, or who work with people who have carer responsibilities. The Department continues to post information relating young carers in the student wellbeing section of our website, and this page provides links to Carers NSW as well as information and links to support services for school communities.
- The Being a Carer, Being a Student, and Being a Kid resource is available for staff on our website. It provides information to support students who are young carers. We also promote the celebration of young carers through the national Young Carer Bursary Program via our internal SchoolBiz news platform.

Consultation with carers

- The Department is represented on the NSW Carers Strategy project management group. We have established partnerships with NSW Family and Community Services, Carers NSW and other organisations to network and consult on policy and program development.

Human resources policies and practice

- We provide a number of flexible working options that staff with carer responsibilities are able to access, including part-time work, job sharing, leave without pay and varying flexible hour arrangements. In 2017, 51,582 employees took short-term leave for family and community responsibilities.
- In 2017, we explored our flexible work practices for corporate staff in response to the Public Service Commission's intent to implement a new flexible work strategy. This strategy aims to achieve the Premier's commitment to making all public sector roles flexible on an 'if not, why not' basis by 2019.
- We developed a range of resources to help corporate staff access flexible work arrangements. These are available on our internal website and include the Flexible Work Arrangements for Corporate Employees Policy, fact sheets and information relating to flexible work options.
- Staff members with carer responsibilities are also able to access the Employee Assistance Program, an independent, confidential and free professional education.nsw.gov.au Public accountability counselling service to support the health and wellbeing of employees. We continue to consider options to enhance support to carers by continuously re-evaluating our human resources policies and practices to ensure they remain in step with the *NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010*.

NSW Department of Family and Community Services

Initiatives to support carers

- Carers Week was held between 16 and 22 October 2016. FACS provided \$100,000 to Carers NSW in 2016–17 to administer Carers Week grants. Grants of up to \$250 enabled 430 carer support groups and organisations to host a Carers Week event for carers. The events attracted approximately 13,500 people, 9,000 of whom were carers.
- During Carers Week, as part of the Hidden Carers outreach project, FACS provided promotional materials to 77 locations across NSW, informing different groups of carers in social housing of the services and support available to them. FACS worked with Carers NSW to develop a suite of written resources for staff from community housing providers, FACS Housing Services and Aboriginal housing offices to distribute. Resources included flyers translated into five languages, as well as specific publications for young carers and Aboriginal carers.

- The NSW Carers Awards were presented by the Minister for Disability Services during Carers Week. In 2016, the NSW Carer of the Year was awarded to young carer Sadie Arida.
- In March 2017, FACS published a paper in the *International Journal of Care and Caring* entitled 'Co-design of a Carers' Strategy for New South Wales: Reflections on a new approach to collaborative policy making for carers'.
- Through a Liveable Communities Grant, FACS funded the University of Technology Sydney, in partnership with the Art Gallery of New South Wales, to develop resources to extend arts-based programs for people with dementia, their family members and carers.
- In 2016–17, Watch This Space – a multi-faceted, state-wide young carer awareness raising project – received support from the FACS Youth Opportunities program. The project, run by 20 young carers from across NSW, focused on identifying hidden carers and raising carer awareness through school-based presentations and media promotion of the successful #YCProject short film.
- FACS participated in a Good Pitch Australia panel, introducing a film, *On Richard's Side*, to an audience of over 300 corporate and philanthropic stakeholders. The film, directed and produced by Andrew Wiseman, provides insight into the everyday joys and trials of living with and caring for someone with a complex disability. Throughout 2016–17, FACS continued to support the film's community outreach by participating in a co-design workshop and hosting a government stakeholder meeting to develop and support the film's social impact campaign. FACS also presented the film to the NSW Carers Advisory Council and the Disability Council NSW.

Consultation with carers

- During 2016–17, FACS completed a statutory review of the Act based on consultation with over 800 people and 50 organisations. The final report was tabled in both Houses of Parliament on 8 November 2016.
- Three of the 10 recommendations made in the report proposed minor legislative amendments, which were subsequently made and assented on 1 June 2017.
- The amendments included a revision to the NSW Carers Charter to more clearly communicate core messages about recognising and valuing carers, changed wording in the Act to encourage agencies to consult with carers and/or bodies representing carers, and the appointment of an independent chair and deputy chair of the NSW Carers Advisory Council. The amended Act was assented on 1 June 2017.
- The remaining seven recommendations in the report focus on revising and updating supporting policy, guidelines and education resources to improve understanding and implementation of the Act.

Other consultation/liason activities relating to policies and initiatives impacting on carers included:

- Resourcing and supporting the NSW Carers Advisory Council, which met four times in 2016–17, to consider a range of issues impacting carers and to advise the Minister for Disability Services.
- Continuing to lead the implementation of the *NSW Carers Strategy 2014–2019*, including publishing the first Carers Strategy progress report, which highlighted seven projects that were either completed or had made significant progress.
- Funding practical projects that assist carers in their daily lives through the Carer Grants Program, with 14 organisations across NSW receiving grants to provide support and information for carers, including five with an Aboriginal or culturally diverse focus.
- Funding Carers NSW to deliver a range of carer services and sector capacity-building programs, such as training and development, peak activities, information and referral services, carer representative and young carer programs.

Human resources policies and practice

During 2016–17, FACS sought to ensure staff awareness and understanding of the NSW Carers Charter and its principles by:

- Continuing to offer a range of flexible work practices to assist employees who are also carers, including flexible working hours, part-time work and personal/carer's leave
- maintaining a dedicated Carers page on the FACS intranet, which has information about the relevance of the Act to FACS employees, as well as a range of resources to support working carers in FACS
- continuing to apply the HR Policy Development Consultation Framework to ensure that carers and other diversity groups are consulted and engaged throughout the policy development and review process
- actively contributing to the NSW Public Service Commission's work on developing a flexible working strategy for the sector.

NSW Ministry of Health

Initiatives to support carers

- Dubbo Koori Yarning Group –The Koori Yarning Group, supported by Western NSW Local Health District and partners, enables Aboriginal carers in the Dubbo area to gather, yarn, share stories and make cultural connections. Information on carer support services was made available to promote trust, awareness and confidence for carers. The Group was recognised in 2016 with a NSW Carers Award in the carer support group category.
- Carers in focus during Multicultural Health Week 2016 – According to Carers NSW, up to one in five carers identify as being from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. In 2016 the theme for Multicultural Health Week was 'Caring for Carers: Supporting people who look after someone'. A key aim of Multicultural Health Week was to boost awareness of services available for carers by providing information and support services in a range of languages.
- Aboriginal Wellbeing Hospital Discharge Journey Booklet - Aboriginal patients and their carers were better supported during hospital visits thanks to an information guide developed especially for them. A booklet of culturally appropriate resources helped the patients while they were receiving care in hospital and after discharge in the Mid North Coast Local Health District. The booklet provided information for the entire hospital process, from admission to discharge and follow-up. It could also be used as an individualised care plan across all specialties. The booklet was adapted and used by other hospitals and local health districts and was a finalist in the 2016 NSW Health Awards.
- The Caring for Our carers trial program was developed after staff at Western Sydney Local Health District listened to requests from patients for carers to be allowed to stay in hospital while providing support. The carers were able to sleep next to patients in 40 specially modified single rooms in the new Clinical Services Building at Blacktown Hospital. The rooms had been modified by a team of architects, patients, carers and staff of Health Infrastructure to include a privacy curtain and a sofa bed that offered a comfortable place to sleep for the carer. The modifications did not interfere with safe clinical care being provided to the patients. Carers were able to leave hospital well-rested and ready to continue providing care when the patient was discharged. The initiative was being developed to help patients in more NSW hospitals, including new facilities for Stage 2 at Blacktown Hospital and as part of the Westmead expansion. It also attracted interest from hundreds of local and overseas health professionals.
- Social impact investment for carers - Silver Chain Community Palliative Care Service. The NSW Government has partnered with Silver Chain Group to deliver a service to enhance care for patients with an advanced, progressive, life-limiting illness. Patients and their families will have on-call access at any time to quality end-of-life care, enabling patients to be cared for at home if that is their choice, and reducing the time that patients spend in hospital. Carers and families will be offered respite care, pastoral care and bereavement support. The service will be provided over seven years to support more than 8340 people in Western Sydney Local Health District in need of palliative care.

- A Concessional Car Parking Policy was implemented across NSW public hospitals that delivered concessional car parking fees to eligible patients, carers and visitors, and provided consistent fees and better access to car parking related information.
- The NSW Ministry of Health released the Responding to Needs of People with Disability during Hospitalisation policy, which guided staff to provide inclusive services to people with disability and their carers.
- South Eastern Sydney Local Health District developed the Admission2Discharge Together program, which used a tool to understand the needs of patients with intellectual disabilities. The tool assisted patients, their families/carers and health staff to communicate effectively and share information.
- Multicultural Health Orientation e-Module - An online orientation e-module was developed to assist staff to provide appropriate services to patients, carers and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The e-module highlighted the importance of utilising professional interpreters offered by Hunter New England Local Health District – Health Care Interpreter Service. Over 85 per cent of new staff completed this cultural competency training.
- Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District Mental Health Triage and Assessment Centre - The Mental Health Triage and Assessment Centre improved access to safety, quality and equity for patients and carers from Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who had a mental illness. It was the first model of its type in Australia, designed to improve outcomes for consumers and carers. The resulting improvement in mental health triage and assessment led to a reduction in emergency department admissions and unnecessary inpatient admissions. Early presentations for assessment and care increased.
- Multicultural Health Week 2016: Caring for Carers - Multicultural Health Week was a key event to highlight the importance of language and culture in health services, raise awareness of health issues in multicultural communities and promote awareness of NSW Health's multicultural health services. Under the theme 'Caring for Carers: Supporting people who look after someone', the week increased awareness especially about people who had recently become a carer due to a change in circumstances, and newly arrived migrants who were not familiar with the health system. The week aimed to identify and reach 'hidden' carers so they could be provided with information and linked to support services.
- A practice-based study on the socio-cultural factors influencing the experience of Chinese and Vietnamese caregivers of people with mental illness - This research project investigated the help-seeking behaviours and health and wellbeing of Chinese and Vietnamese migrant carers of people with mental illness. The research, in partnership with the University of NSW, was to better understand how socio-cultural factors may affect carers and how to improve support for the carers, including better understanding of pathways to care.
- St Vincent's Health Network Darlinghurst launched the Centre for Family Based Mental Health Care, a partnership with Sydney University. The Centre focussed on addressing the need for a recovery-orientated approach to mental health care with a stronger focus on young people, early intervention and involving families and carers in treatment as well as service design.

Consultation with carers

- NSW Health Carers Program Statewide Workshop in Tamworth – In February 2017, carers support service representatives from all local health districts met in Tamworth. The event focussed on investigating opportunities to better support Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal carers in rural and regional areas when they transferred to and from metropolitan health services. The workshop informs a NSW Health key directions document enhancing recognition and support for carers.

iCare

Initiatives to support carers

icare highly values carers and is committed to the spirit of the NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010. We meet our obligations laid out in the Carers Charter at an individual and systemic level by:

- providing training to frontline staff on carer awareness from Carers NSW
- consulting with participants and their families and carers in co-designing new processes and policies through the Optimal Care program
- partnering with Carers NSW in the 'we care' program, to develop new services to support families and carers across the icare service lines
- promoting and funding a number of initiatives which support the families and carers of participants including the Strength-2-Strength program for family members of those who have sustained a spinal cord injury or traumatic brain injury; and
- active engagement with family and carers to assess and plan participant supports through the My Plan process.

Partnership with Carers NSW to support and mentor families, kids and young carers

We are committed to the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 and we were proud to announce a new partnership with Carers NSW in October 2016 to deliver two new carer support programs for families and carers of people who have sustained serious injuries in either a motor vehicle or workplace accident in NSW.

Launched in January 2017, the icare Families and icare Kids & Young People programs aim to build the resilience, knowledge and emotional wellbeing of families and carers. Each program is modelled on support services currently used in the brain injury and dementia care space.

The programs are referral-based and will provide professional mentoring and counselling support for approximately 400 carers and families of our care scheme customers over three years. What's more they are delivered in the communities people live in and not in a group or hospital environment.

We aim to assist families and carers to overcome the significant life changes they experience in caring for a loved one after a serious road or workplace accident. We're incredibly proud to partner with Carers NSW to deliver these programs to provide valuable coping and life-skills to carers.

The iCare Foundation also provided \$146,043 in grant funding to the university of New South Wales for a program to adapt the existing on-line depression and anxiety therapy program (This Way Up) to provide family and carers of people with a traumatic brain injury with specific strategies to deal with complex and challenging behaviour.

Human resources policies and practice

icare's employee related policies are principles based and our inclusion, leave and flexible work policies have been developed to be inclusive of all employees including those with carer responsibilities. Our flexible work policy encourages employees and people leaders to work together to agree flexible ways of working that enables all employees to contribute fully. Our inclusion policy states that we do not discriminate on the basis of race, including colour, nationality, descent and ethnic, ethno-religious or national origin, sex, including pregnancy and breastfeeding, marital or domestic status, disability, homosexuality, age, transgender status and carer responsibilities.

NSW Department of Justice

Initiatives to support carers

The Department of Justice:

The Department of Justice is very supportive of staff with carer's responsibility and maintains two intranet pages providing information on different aspects for carers:

- The workforce diversity carers intranet pages, detail a range of information including access to the Department's current flexible working hour agreements and the Carers' Charter. In addition, there are a range of links to resources issued by the Department of Family and Community Services
- The Pay and Conditions intranet pages detail information specifically related to Carers' leave.

The Office of Public Guardian: :

The Office of the Public Guardian undertook community education sessions for carers of people with disability in 2016-17:

Date	Agency	Audience
10/05/17	Carers NSW (audience)	Carers for people with mental health issues
27/03/17	The Vietnamese Parents With Disabled Children Support Group In NSW Inc	Carers of children with disability
12/08/16	Transcultural Mental Health Service	(Audience: bilingual group leaders who run support groups for carers of people living with a mental illness across Sydney)
17/08/16	3 Bridges Community	Carers for frail-aged with dementia, disability and mental health issues
13/10/16	Transition for Carers Seminar, Westmead Children's Hospital	Carers of young people transitioning to adult services
Nov 2016	Uniting Care Mental Health	Carers for people with mental health issues

Anti-Discrimination NSW:

- Carers responsibilities factsheet - Detailed fact sheet for carers on the laws regarding discrimination due to caring responsibilities. This fact sheet includes information including; Who the law covers, in what situations, workplace and dismissal rights, complaint mechanisms and examples of previous complaints to the Anti-Discrimination Board.
- Distribution of the "Do you care?" poster to stakeholders. These posters outline carers rights in the workplace and provide details relevant to carers from the NSW anti-discrimination law.

Consultation with carers

NSW Trustee and Guardian:

- The legislative framework for both the NSW Trustee and Guardian and the Public Guardian makes it mandatory to consider the views of those involved in clients' lives when making decisions.
- This enshrines the role of carers in all decision making processes for substitute decisions. The role of carers in the decision making process has been reinforced by the decision making frameworks used by NSW Trustee and Guardian.
- NSW Trustee and Guardian maintains an Engagement of Carers Policy and Procedure on its intranet for all staff.

Other strategies designed to support Carers include:

- The Staff with Disability Network which has extended an invitation to all carers to be members of this important Departmental network
- The Department commenced negotiations in 2016 to create a single Flex Agreement for staff who work under Flexible working arrangements. The new single Flex Agreement is due for release on or around April 2018.

These two strategies are a positive outcome for all employees, including those with carers responsibilities. The single Flex Agreement will provide consistent working conditions, while still allowing for existing operational differences particular to certain areas of work and by participating in network, such as the Disability Network.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Bellingen Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council has actively acknowledged and recognised the role of carers in the Bellingen Shire community through its services provided in the Dorrigo Support Centre and through participating in broader area programs to support carers such as a Carers Wellbeing Day during (October) and Mental Health Month.
- The NSW Carers Charter is displayed at the Dorrigo Support Centre and staff are aware of and practice its principles.
- In addition the Support Centre is a provider of services to carers under the Carers Together program. All carers and indeed clients are treated with the respect and dignity as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Bogan Shire Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Council adopted a Carer's Leave Policy in March 2013 and adopted a revised version April 2015 with a review scheduled for November 2017.

Broken Hill City Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council auspice several carer programs and activities to support carers in their caring role.

Human resources policies and practice

- Council maintains a record of staff who identify as “carers” as defined under the Act and are considerate of the impact this may have on their work life.
- The Workplace Consultative Committee are kept up to date on changes in legislation impacting carers, and the role of the organisation in supporting those staff. Further information on carer activities and education is frequently distributed throughout the Council and to various community stakeholders.

Byron Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council has continued to raise awareness of the Carers (Recognition) Act and NSW Carers Charter by displaying materials throughout its worksites and distributing information in staff newsletters, memos and emails.

Consultation with carers

- Council captures data in relation to employees with caring responsibilities on commencement of employment and also in our staff surveys.

Human resources policies and practice

- Council also provides support to carers through its Employee Assistance Program and has adopted HR policies that promote and encourage flexibility and provide workplace support for employees who are also carers.

Cabonne Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council’s services were provided in a manner sensitive to the needs of carers with their requirements taken into consideration by Council’s Community Transport, Home and Community Care (HACC) and childcare services.

Human resources policies and practice

- Council granted carer’s leave to staff members on numerous occasions throughout the past year and has provided some flexibility for staff members with ongoing caring responsibilities.

Camden Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council supports the NSW Companion card and accepts the card at its venues. In recognising the important role played by carers Council hosted a range of Carers Week activities promoting self-care and networking for carers.

Human resources policies and practice

- Council is committed to supporting employees with carer responsibilities. Council's Induction Program promotes employees' leave provision options including Carers Leave.
- Council complies with the NSW Local Government (State) Award, which includes various leave provisions for employees including 'Carers Leave'.
- Where employees have requested flexible working arrangements due to carer's responsibilities, Council has worked with them to accommodate their requirements.

Carrathool Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Carrathool Shire Council has always considered and complied with the NSW Carers Charter. Council continues to provide services for carers and people being cared for by carers through the provision of Home and Community Care Services (HACC), Community Transport and Respite activities.

Sydney, City of

Initiatives to support carers

The City is committed to supporting people with carer responsibilities. The City's goal is to respond to the diverse and changing needs of employees who are carers by providing a flexible, inclusive workplace that is supportive of individual life situations.

Building a 'care aware' workplace at the City through initiatives such as:

- developed a carers toolkit in consultation with Carers NSW
- targeted communication to raise awareness of the carers toolkit to enable managers and employees to understand issues and find solutions
- revised the City's intranet to include the Carers Toolkit and provide a range of practical information for employees with carer responsibilities and their managers
- incorporated awareness of people with disabilities and carer responsibilities into manager training initiatives
- reviewed and updated internal policies and procedures following legislative changes

Consultation with carers

- Dialogue with employees with carer responsibilities who self-identified via an all-staff survey that sought employee views on all aspects of working at the City. The survey provided greater insight

about the diverse needs and experiences of employees with carer responsibilities. Respondents were more likely to be female, aged 40-49 and have been working full-time at the City for five years or more.

Human resources policies and practice

- Implementation of key areas for improvement identified in the 2015/16 survey of employees with carer responsibilities including a review of workplace flexibility and policies, better access to information, enhancing learning and development opportunities and raising awareness through communication and training.

Clarence Valley Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council, through its Care & Support Services provides information, support, direct services and advocacy for people who care for family members with a disability, chronic illness or are frail aged.
- The direct services include the Older Parent Carer program, My Plan My Choice for carers and Your Choice Respite. These services operate at capacity with over 300 families and carers benefiting from education, support in the home, respite with holidays, equipment and other individual needs.
- Care & Support also have a range of aged care services that may be of assistance to working carers who are responsible for their parents or older family members. The service has also registered to be an NDIS provider and has worked with families and carers to hold information sessions throughout the area.
- Coordinators have also assisted with preplanning so that families are ready to commence under the NDIS.

Human resources policies and practice

- Council introduced a Flexible Working Arrangements Policy in August 2012 to provide flexibility in handling work and family responsibilities. Council utilises its Consultative Committee as a consulting mechanism with employees during the development of HR policies.
- Employees are encouraged to speak with their direct supervisor in the first instance regarding their personal circumstances and the requirement for flexible working arrangements. All employees are eligible for Carer's Leave.
- Council has an Employee Assistance Program for all staff to access and its use is encouraged through the regular HR Bulletin. Staff can access this service for personal reasons in complete privacy. Partners and carers are also eligible to use this service. All staff are encouraged to contact Care & Support Services for any information about services that may be required in their caring role.

Cumberland Council

Initiatives to support carers

Council under the merged entity of Cumberland Council updated the Carers Charter which the Administrator signed off on.

Consultation with carers

During the last 12 months Council also undertook extensive consultation in relation to the development of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan, engaging with 1,913 people across the Cumberland LGA by survey, focus groups, and forums.

Human resources policies and practice

An internal page on the intranet is available to all staff within Council listing relevant resources. Cumberland Council Carers Guidelines were updated in January 2017.

Council has various policies/ guidelines in place to support staff who are carers. This includes:

- Carers Charter
- Carers Guidelines
- Flexible Working arrangements
- Purchased Leave Guidelines
- Job Share Guidelines

Council also has a Carers Network which it will be relaunching under the new Cumberland Council entity for staff who are carers.

Eurobodalla Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council will undertake actions to increase awareness of the *NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010* in the next year to ensure that its obligations are met.

Consultation with carers

Council provides a wide range of services for people with a disability, frail older people, and their carers. In delivering those services Council:

- Ensures home visits are done when carers are available
- Provides carers with respite to attend events/info sessions
- Provides client handbooks
- Regularly renews care plans as directed by the client
- Meets with families/care recipients and carers to develop a work/care plan that includes goals and aspirations that will help sustain the carer in their caring role
- Attaches the 'Charter of Rights and Responsibilities for Community Care' to client hand books.

Human resources policies and practice

- The policies and codes of practice that guide the way that Council staff work, have been developed to optimise flexibility of working hours while ensuring services to the community are of appropriate timeliness and quality.
- Council has a formal Flexible Work Agreement ratified by relevant unions, which allows greater flexibility in terms of starting and finishing times as well as allowing for the accrual of credits due to extra hours worked above standard hours. Staff, including those with carer responsibilities, can then access these credits throughout the year further enhancing flexibility.

Fairfield City Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Held a Carers Week Event 2016 - A carers night to celebrate carer's contribution in our community, which included a formal dinner and entertainment.
- Provided information regarding services and programs to assist carers at meetings for families and carers, network meetings and Senior's Week events.
- Held International Day of People with Disabilities events which included an event for carer's and people with a disability from different cultural backgrounds.
- Engaged carers in the development of the strategy on ageing for Fairfield City 2013–2017 and Disability Access Plan.
- Offered free access to the leisure centre to carers of people in receipt of the Disability Support Pension when they are supporting a person with a disability.
- Provided training to ensure employee awareness of carer recognition support.

Human resources policies and practice

The Diversity Management – Equal Employment Opportunity Plan 2017 - 2020 was adopted by Council in 2017. The actions identified in the plan will ensure that employees are aware of, and understand the NSW Carers Charter, this will include:

- Development and implementation of the carer recognition educational module utilising Council's Learning Management System
- Amendment of the Human Resource Policy template to ensure consideration of the Carers Charter in policy review and development.

The Flexible Working Arrangements Policy and the Local Government (State) Award 2017 provide flexibility to enable employees to better manage their work and family responsibilities.

Georges River Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council's Community Development team run programs for the aged, disability, youth, family, multicultural and Indigenous services and with other members of the community who may be cared for by carers. The Community Development staff are provided with a copy of the *Carers (Recognition) Act 2010* and associated Guidelines and adhere to the principles contained therein.

Gunnedah Shire Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Council human resource and equal employment opportunity policies fully reflect the principles embedded in the Carers Recognition Act 2010.
- Council has a carer's leave available for employees who are unable to attend work because of their caring role. If an employee has exhausted all sick leave when performing their caring role other leave may be used which enables the employee to continue in their caring role.
- Under some circumstances, flexible working hours have been granted to staff which enables these employees to perform their caring role. These flexible working hours have not impacted on the operation of the business.

Gwydir Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

- In our Aged Care services carers play an important role. Community consultation is undertaken with carers to determine any specific needs that they have that can be accommodated by the council.
- Carers are always invited to attend celebrations at our aged care services.

Consultation with carers

- There is a representative number of carers involved in the Naroo Advisory Committee who meet on a monthly basis.

Human resources policies and practice

- When considering carer responsibilities the Council introduced flexible work arrangement for our staff. This provides the opportunity for flexibility in handling work, family and carer responsibilities.
- Staff are encouraged to speak with their supervisors or a representative from the Human Resources Team regarding their personal circumstances and the need for flexible work arrangements. Flexible work arrangements have been developed in consultation with the internal Consultative Committee.

Hills Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council's Hills Community Care provides a number of important services including a Respite Care program that provides care to the frail-aged or people with disabilities, allowing full-time carers to take a break.

Hornsby Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council's Community Services Branch identifies and provides referrals to a comprehensive range of community support services and programs, indirectly supporting carers within the Hornsby Shire community.
- During the year, a Community Connections Hot Desk was operating weekly at Hornsby Library. The Hot Desk is a referral and information service with a diverse range of scheduled topics and service providers, connecting the community to local services.
- Council also provides a Home Library Service to residents of Hornsby Shire who have difficulty visiting the libraries, including carers, delivering items and exchanging them on a regular basis. In 2016/17, over 2,200 home library visits were made.

Human resources policies and practice

Council supports staff who are carers in a number of ways and continues to comply with the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 through its Sick and Carers Leave Policy and flexible work practices. Employees are afforded access to flexible work practices to accommodate any carer's responsibilities through:

- the use of flex time, including flexible start and finish times, and a nine day fortnight
- access to annual, long service, and carers leave as well as leave without pay where necessary
- part time work
- health and well-being leave.

Every carer's circumstances are considered individually to ensure that their needs are recognised.

- Council promotes R U OK Day every year, focusing on the mental health of staff by reminding them of the four action steps to start a conversation.
- Council also provides an Employee Assistance Program offering confidential counselling for work-related or personal problems. Access EAP is an independent service focused on maintaining the mental wellbeing of employees which offers access to professionally qualified and experienced psychologists.
- The NSW Carers Charter is available on Council's intranet.

Inner West Council

Initiatives to support carers

Council developed the Inner West Inclusion Action Plan. Actions relevant to carers include:

- Investigate the provision of spaces and programs for peer support for people in unpaid assistant roles.
- Continue Council's roles, in alignment with the Disability Inclusion Act including: liaison, advocacy, information provision and planning.
- Provide and promote resources for managers on successful leadership of diverse employees, including employees with a disability and their assistants (for example Australian Human Rights Commission '2010 Workers with a Mental Illness: A Practical Guide for Managers').

- Council hosted presentations and opportunities for social interaction through the Not So Young Club. Topics included medicine management and a Trustee and Guardian talk on Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship.
- Council hosted a World Elder Abuse Awareness Day event.
- Council collaborated with Ethnic Community Services Cooperative, Inner West agencies, Burwood Council and Canterbury Bankstown Council to deliver the annual Multicultural Dementia Forum which this year included an expo for people with dementia and their carers.
- Council liaised with COTA to promote peer education programs about Consumer Directed Care and wellbeing programs.
- Council promoted a wide range of educational activities through the local aged services interagency and seniors' databases, such as those provided by Inner West Training Calendar, STARS (Canterbury City Community Centre) in conjunction with Alzheimer's Australia and via the Sydney Local Health District Dementia Advisor for the Inner West.
- Inner West Council Home Maintenance and Modification Service and Gardening and Handyperson Service.
- This Council managed service assists clients and their carers to live safely and independently within their homes.
- Council provided opportunities for peer support and informal interaction and consultation with service providers through the Leichhardt Dementia Café and the Marrickville Dementia Café for people with dementia and their carers.
- Health and wellbeing programs such as Council's Active and Connected Program targets seniors who are carers as well. Council actively promoted these programs via a range of networks to reach carers groups.
- Council delivered a Dementia Dance program in Petersham for people with dementia and their carers.
- Council provided free 'stress less' creative wellbeing programs and 'local social' monthly coffee get-togethers and promoted these to carers.
- For Carers Week 2016 Council hosted grandparents' day events across the Inner West, targeted at grandparent carers.
- Council promoted a wide range of programs for carers using the aged services interagency and seniors' databases such as those provided by Commonwealth Carelink and Respite Service and Carers NSW.
- Council partnered with Marrickville Health Centre to deliver gentle exercise programs for seniors. The programs actively target carers.
- Council promoted the Active and Connected Program through a talk to the Turkish Women's Group at Marrickville Health Centre. The group engages carers.

Consultation with carers

- Consultation is undertaken with both clients and carers at the time of request of service and following the service. An annual survey is conducted for direct feedback and revision of service policy, service provision and guidelines.
- Consultation is also undertaken with local Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) and Community Care Supports Program (CCSP), funded service providers through the Inner West

Disability Forum, Inner West Community Care Forum and the Canterbury Marrickville Sector Support Forum for service planning and improvements.

- Council held community consultation workshops to develop the Inner West Inclusion Action Plan.
- Council participated in the Inner West Community Care Forum, Inner West Council Aged Services Interagency, Canterbury and Marrickville Sector Support Forum, Balmain Hospital Community Advisory Committee and the Inner West Disability Forum.
- Council convened the Inner West Aged Services Interagency. A planning day is held annually which drives the work of the interagency in collaborative projects to target needs of older people in the Inner West as well as prioritise actions for future ageing strategies.
- Council arranged a consultation with the aged services interagency to provide feedback to Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) as part of their national recommendations for My Aged Care in relation to barriers for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Council established the Inner West Elder Abuse Collaborative to develop an interagency response to the NSW policy. Carers groups are represented.

Human resources policies and practice

- Council provides a range of flexible work patterns to enable staff with carer's responsibilities to better manage work and carers responsibilities, including full-time, part-time and casual work; flexible working hours; and rostered day off systems.
- Council also considers requests for flexibility to substantive working arrangements for carers responsibilities on an individual basis taking into account operational requirements.
- Due to the amalgamation of the three former Councils, improvements to the current HR practices to support staff who are carers has not been prioritised to be reviewed in this year. Council's focus has been on placing staff into the new organisation structure.

Leeton Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

Leeton Shire Council has provided the following Home and Community Care services in relation to providing information, support and advocacy for people who care for family members with a disability, chronic illness or are frail aged.

These services are:

- *Meals on Wheels
- *Home Modifications
- Community Transport
- *Social Support Services

Council also provides home delivery of library material for those unable to attend the Leeton Library.

**These services were transferred to Temora Shire Council by novated lease on 1 October 2016.*

Liverpool Plains Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council Services are provided in a manner sensitive to the needs of carers with their requirements taken into consideration by Council's Community Transport, Commonwealth Home Support Program (formerly HACC) and Childcare Services. Carers form part of the Commonwealth Home Support Program target group.

Human resources policies and practice

- Council grants carer's leave to staff members when required, as outlined in the *Local Government (State) Award – 2017*.

Narrabri Shire Council

Human resources policies and practice

Council is required to comply with the Carers Recognition Act 2010 and to recognise, through its human resource management policies and procedures, the significant role carers play within our society. Narrabri Shire Council is compliant with this Act and takes into account the significant role carers make when making decisions regarding human resource practices.

We acknowledge that many of carers' roles extend beyond those of being parents and include care of elder people within families, disabled family members, and those experiencing such issues as family violence; and we recognise carers' responsibilities through our carers leave provisions, flexible work practices and family friendly work environment. We also promote the services of community organisations that support carers.

Northern Beaches Council

Initiatives to support carers

Two service provider expos were held to inform on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Carers and people with disability were supported to attend to learn more about options available to them through the NDIS to achieve their own goals toward having a good life.

Special information seminars were held during the expo for families of young children (0-8 years), students and school leavers, or adults, as well as a session on Plan Implementation.

Council hosted two activities to celebrate Carers Week. Approximately 60 carers attended these activities aimed at expanding their networks for social connection and supporting them to maintain their health and wellbeing and caring role.

Consultation with carers

During the period 2016/17 Council developed a Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) in line with the requirements of the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014*. The actions in the DIAP have been designed following extensive consultation with internal and external stakeholders. Carers and organisations representing carers participated in the consultation process and provided feedback and input to the development of the DIAP through the community forums and community survey (38/109 responses from carers).

Human resources policies and practice

Northern Beaches Council has recently embarked on a program of harmonisation of its human resources policies, involving a review of all existing human resources policies across the three former Councils of Manly, Warringah and Pittwater. This review will include an analysis of all human resources policies so far as they may significantly affect the role of a member of staff of the Council as a carer, and will be developed having due regard to the NSW Carers Charter.

In the meantime, Council continued to make carers leave available to all staff under the Local Government (State) Award, and continues to provide flexibility for staff who are carers.

Randwick City Council

Initiatives to support carers

The Council supports carers in a range of ways, directly and indirectly. Examples of this support includes:

- use of its indoor pool at the Des Renford Leisure Centre on a weekly basis at no cost, participating in Rainbow Club swimming lessons or training for the Sydney Special Olympics, thereby reducing participation costs to parents and carers of children with an intellectual or physical disability;
- staging community events and activities at venues that are accessible so that residents and visitors, together with their carers, can fully participate in events provided to the general community;
- provision of a beach wheelchair ramp at Maroubra Beach and a water wheelchair at Clovelly Beach so that people with disabilities can enjoy the ocean with friends and families; and
- organised information forums and healthy living workshops in partnership with peak bodies and agencies such as Carers NSW, POWH, and Alzheimer's Australia.

In 2016/17, the following health and wellbeing information sessions, designed for residents who provide care to family members or friends, were held:

- Healthy Relationships As We Age Forum held in partnership with the POWH Aged Care Psychiatry Unit. The Forum explored relationships, legal issues, abuse of older persons, domestic violence and managing stress and self-care. The Forum was especially designed for carers and older people and was open to Council staff.
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Forum held in partnership with Inner Sydney Voice explored the design and the roll out of the NDIS, and how people can access and make the most of the scheme. The Forum was designed for community members and carers and was open to Council staff.
- Mindful Relationships Seminar, held in partnership with Carers NSW, supported participants to develop a more mindful approach to relationships. The Seminar was especially designed for carers who care for a family member with a mental illness to sustain their caring role.
- Safe TALK - Suicide Prevention Awareness Training held in partnership with Carers NSW, Lifeline and Beyond Blue, involved suicide prevention awareness training sessions for carers who care for someone with a mental illness.
- Suicide Talk information session held in partnership with Carers NSW aimed to raise community awareness about suicide and reduce the stigma and taboo surrounding suicide. The information session was designed for carers and community members and open to Council staff.
- Understanding Anxiety and Depression information session explored issues in depression and anxiety for carers and community members, and was open to Council staff.
- Your Brain Matters presentations held in partnership with Alzheimer's Australia NSW explored the power of prevention and strategies for older people and carers to maximise their brain health. These sessions were attended by Council staff and their family members.

- Memory Information days held in partnership with the Eastern Sydney and City of Sydney Dementia Advisory Service. The sessions were designed especially for carers of people diagnosed with dementia and were open to Council staff.
- Heritage Twilight tours and talks held at the Prince Henry Nursing and Medical Museum Little Bay. The Twilight Tours explored the history of the former Prince Henry Hospital. Topics were tailored to meet the interests of carers.
- Free play readings aimed at reducing social isolation for older people and carers, providing an opportunity for carers to connect to their local community and with each other.
- Disability Ball for people with a disability and their carers held in partnership with Holdsworth Community. The Ball celebrated International Day of People with a Disability.
- Kamay Cultural Experience which included a talk and guided tour of the Kamay Botany Bay National Park with Community Cultural Leader, Dean Kelly. This Seniors' Week event was especially designed for carers and older people from a diverse range of backgrounds living in Randwick City and surrounding areas.
- The Eora Elders Olympics held in partnership with Aged and Community Services NSW involved modified sporting activities, traditional Aboriginal games, and health and wellbeing advice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders.

Randwick City Library also provides a variety of services, events and programs to aid carers and those they support:

- Home Library Service - Randwick City Library delivers books, DVDs and library resources to house-bound individuals, Diversional/ Recreational Therapists and carers within the community.
- Health talks - Randwick City Library ran health talks relating to the topics of osteoporosis, stress and anxiety. Aimed at seniors as well as carers, these sessions provided useful tips to improve individuals' quality of life.
- Speech pathology sessions - Run in partnership with Learning Links and aimed at parents and carers of children with speech or language difficulties and also disorders such as stuttering.
- Children's workshops - Throughout the year Randwick City Library ran nine workshops focusing on the importance of play, childhood development and parenting, aimed at parents and carers. The sessions were run by an accredited Early Childhood Educator.

Consultation with carers

- Have Your Say community consultation workshops held in partnership with Waverley Council for the purpose of developing the Randwick and Waverley Disability Inclusion Action Plan. The workshops were designed for community members and carers and were open to Council staff.

Human resources policies and practice

Council continues to comply with the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 through our sound Sick and Carers' Leave Policy and flexible work practices. Each carer's requirement is looked at individually to ensure that special needs are taken into consideration. As a result, managers have the discretion to provide extra support when needed. In 2016/17, 4,994 hours of paid Carers' Leave was accessed by staff at Randwick City Council.

Throughout the year Council provided staff with support and information to assist in their caring responsibilities. All Stops To Randwick, our annual Council-wide training forum, continues to include regular focus on employee benefits and total wellbeing. In addition the following sessions were provided to staff:

- Healthy Eating and immune boosters
- Healthy sleep patterns
- Mindfulness
- RUOK? Depression and suicide awareness.

Sutherland Shire Council

Human resources policies and practice

The Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 was promoted on our intranet to staff and information on the Act was distributed through our online Managers Portal. The information explains the definition of a carer and the Council policies and employment benefits that exist to support carers.

Council has many flexible working options already existing in policies and procedures to assist staff with carers responsibilities. These include:

- the use of flexi time
- the ability to alter start and finish times
- access to personal, annual, long service leave and leave without pay
- the ability to work part time or a compact week
- the ability to work from home.

Tamworth Regional Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council engages the New England Carer Support Services to provide information, support and advocacy for people who care for family members with a disability, chronic illness or are frail aged. The service continues to facilitate a range of social meetings as well as information forums for carers throughout the year, including a group for all carers.
- A Region Carers Conference is held bi-annually. Council auspices a Carers Support Group and newsletter and employees are encouraged to register with this service.

Consultation with carers

- Council utilises its Consultative Committee as a consulting mechanism with employees during the development of human resources policies and will be offering flexible working as part of the recruitment process for all new positions.

Human resources policies and practice

- Carer Awareness training is held by Council for all new employees employed in a care role by the Cultural and Community Services Division as part of their orientation. The information given is included in their Welcome to Council packs including a copy of the Carers Charter.
- Council has a Flexible Working Arrangements policy in place which provides the opportunity for flexibility in handling work and family responsibilities.

Further information on defining a human service agency

Explanation of Terms

The *Carers (Recognition) Act 2010* (NSW) sets out some basic definitions for terms that will assist government agencies in NSW to assess their respective obligations under this Act. These are:

- the definition of a “carer”;
- the definition of a “public service agency”; and
- the definition of a “human services agency”.

This document will seek to define and explain the meaning of each of these terms to provide NSW government agencies with clarity as to their meaning and allow them to better assess the applicability of these terms to the activities of their organisation.

The Definition of a “Carer”

The *Carers (Recognition) Act 2010* defines a person to be a “carer” if they provide ongoing personal care, support and assistance to any other person who needs that assistance because they:

- have a disability within the meaning of the Disability Inclusion Act 2014,
- have a medical condition (including terminal or chronic illness);
- have a mental illness; or
- are frail and aged.

The *Carers (Recognition) Act 2010* defines a carer as a person who provides ongoing personal care, support and assistance to any other individual who needs it because that other individual:

- (a) is a person with disability within the meaning of the Disability Inclusion Act 2014, or
- (b) has a medical condition (including a terminal or chronic illness), or
- (c) has a mental illness, or
- (d) is frail and aged.

A person is not a carer for the purposes of this Act in respect of care, support and assistance that a person provides:

- (a) under a contract of service or a contract for the provision of services, or
- (b) in the course of doing voluntary work for a charitable, welfare or community organisation, or
- (c) as part of the requirements of a course of education or training.

To avoid doubt, a person is not a carer of another person for the purposes of the Act merely because the person:

- (a) is the spouse or de facto partner of the person, or
- (b) is the parent, guardian, child or other relative of the other person, or
- (c) lives with the other person.

Definition of a “Disability”

The *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* defines a “disability”, in relation to a person, to be a long-term physical, psychiatric, intellectual or sensory impairment that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder the person’s full and effective participation in the community on an equal basis with others.

The Definition of a “Public Service Agency”

The *Carers (Recognition) Act 2010* defines a “public service agency” broadly to be any of a number of specified NSW government departments and agencies, including local councils. The NSW government bodies specified are:

- (a) a Division of the Government Service,
- (b) a local health district or statutory health corporation (within the meaning of the Health Services Act 1997),
- (c) the NSW Police Force,
- (d) a NSW Government agency or other authority of the State,
- (e) a local council,
- (f) a State owned corporation,
- (g) any other person or body that is prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this definition.

The Definition of a “Human Services Agency”

The *Carers (Recognition) Act 2010* establishes a special category within those NSW government bodies deemed to be “public service agencies”. The agencies within this category are deemed by the Act to be “human services agencies”. Government bodies deemed by the Act to be “human services agencies” have extra obligations imposed on them in addition the standard obligations imposed on all “public service agencies”.

“Human services agencies” are defined by the Act as being any “public service agency” that provides services directed at carers or persons being cared for by carers.

Thus, it can be said that under the *Carers (Recognition) Act 2010*, “human services agencies” are those “public service agencies” that provide either or both of:

- services directed at persons with disability, a medical condition, a mental illness or are frail and aged; or
- services directed at people who are carers of the above listed categories of persons.

Consequently, it is possible that a government body may be a “human services agency” under the *Carers (Recognition) Act 2010* without actually providing any services that are directed at carers themselves – all that is necessary is that they provide services directed at people who may be being assisted by carers.

Local Councils may be “Human Services Agencies”

Local councils in NSW are “public service agencies” under the Act. Thus, local councils in NSW, like other NSW government agencies, may be deemed to be “human services agencies” if they meet the criteria set by the Act.

Other Considerations for Public Service Agencies

The fact that a NSW government body has a Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) in place (as required by the Disability Inclusion Act 2014) will not of itself cause it to be classified as a “human services agency” under the *Carers (Recognition) Act 2010*.

The same principle applies for some of the generally directed services or facilities NSW government bodies may provide. The mere fact that these services or facilities happen to be used by carers or persons with disability, a medical condition a mental illness or persons who are carers or have special arrangements in place to make them more accessible to these groups of persons will not of itself cause the particular body to be classified as a “human services agency”. The services or facilities delivered by the government body must be specifically directed at one or more of these groups for it to be sufficient to cause the relevant body to be deemed a “human services agency”.

Examples of Activities Undertaken by Human Services Agencies

To assist NSW government agencies in determining whether or not they should be classified under the *Carers (Recognition) Act 2010* as a “human service agency”, a list of services commonly provided by government agencies directed at carers or those for whom they care for is provided below. If a government agency provides any one of these services it would be reasonable to conclude they the *Carers (Recognition) Act 2010* would deem them to be “human services agencies”. The list is as follows:

- **“meals on wheels” programs** – “meals on wheels” or similar style programs that prepare and deliver meals to people who because of frailty and age or disability, a chronic medical condition or mental illness are unable to prepare such meals for themselves.
- **leisure, socialisation and education services or centres** – services that provide targeted leisure, socialisation or education programs to older people with disability, a chronic medical condition or mental illness. These programs may include gentle exercise classes, social outings, musical or cultural performances, arts and craft classes and shared meals.
- **support services directed at those being cared for** – services that seek to improve the quality of life of older people with disability, medical condition or mental illness in their home environment or day to day life. Such services may include home visits, transport assistance, buddy programs, repairs and maintenance tasks and help with everyday tasks like shopping, cooking, financial management and writing.
- **support services targeting carers** – services that seek to provide relief and assistance for carers including respite care, counselling and help with day to day activities.
- **childcare centres and pre-schools that cater specifically for children who have a disability or other special needs** – councils or agencies may operate childcare centres or pre-schools that cater specifically for children with disabilities.
- **provision of specialist advice** – councils or government agencies may establish facilities or programs to provide carers or persons who have a disability or chronic medical condition or mental illness with specialist advice of a legal, financial and relationship nature.
- **employment services** – councils or government agencies may provide services directed at assisting carers or persons with a disability, medical condition or mental illness and aged persons find employment.
- **carer support groups** – councils or government agencies may manage and facilitate support groups for carers where they are able to receive emotional and practical support and network with other carers who may be experiencing similar issues and challenges in their role as a carer.

For more information visit
www.facs.nsw.gov.au/inclusion/carers

NSW Government Department of
Communities and Justice

Email CarerStr@facs.nsw.gov.au

