



Family &
Community
Services

Carers (Recognition) Act 2010
Reporting by Human Service Agencies
December 2017

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1 Introduction

The objects of the *NSW Carers Recognition Act 2010* (the Act) are to enact a Carers Charter to recognise the role and contribution of carers to our community and to the people they care for; and increase awareness of the valuable contribution that carers make to our community.

To further these objects, the Act places specific obligations on NSW public sector agencies. These obligations are to:

- increase awareness of the NSW Carers Charter;
- consult with carers and/ or organisations that represent carers; and
- consider the NSW Carers Charter when developing internal human resources policies

The Act also places additional obligations on Human Service Agencies (HSA), defined as public sector agencies that provide services directed at carers or the people they care for (for example health, disability or care services). HSA must ensure that all of their staff and agents take action to reflect the principles of the NSW Carers Charter, and report on their compliance with the Act in their annual report.

The 2016 review of the Act found that annual reporting is an appropriate mechanism to ensure that the key agencies providing services to carers and the people they care for, including the human service agencies, take responsibility for complying with the Act. The review recommended that to raise the profile of compliance activities and encourage compliance, FACS collate and publish agency compliance statements on its website and provide a report to the Minister (recommendation 2).

This report collates information provided by human service agencies about their reporting on compliance with the Act in 2015/16. It also profiles examples of good practice compliance with the Act. In recognition of the limited reporting on compliance by some agencies, the report also suggests strategies to support future reporting that FACS will seek to implement as part of its ongoing response to the 2016 review of the Act.

This report is provided to the Minister to implement recommendation 2 of the 2016 review of the Act.

2 Strategies to support future reporting

In 2018 FACS will be working with public sector agencies and other relevant bodies to increase both the quantity and quality of future reporting on compliance with the Act. This will build on work already completed in 2017 to encourage more widespread compliance and reporting, including engagement with contacts in public service agencies about Act compliance and reporting,

and work with the Office of Local Government to promote Act reporting requirements.

Strategies that FACS will implement to support future reporting include:

- Consult with public sector agencies to find out the information and support they need to assist with compliance and reporting
- Review and update the *Act Implementation Guidelines for Public Sector Agencies*, including the reporting template, to provide greater clarity to agencies about how to report on compliance
- Communicate and engage with individual human service agencies to ensure they are aware of their obligations and reporting requirements
- Work with Local Government NSW and the Office for Local Government to ensure information about Act compliance is included in relevant checklists, guides and manuals that guide planning and reporting.
- Work with NSW Treasury to ensure that the responsibilities of human service agencies in relation to the Act are included in the [NSW Treasury Annual Report Compliance Checklist](#).

3 Overview of 2015/16 Human Service Agency annual reporting

The following HSA were advised of the outcomes of the 2016 review of the Act and asked to provide copies of their 2015/16 reports on Act compliance:

- NSW Department of Justice
- Health Care Complaints Commission
- NSW Ombudsman
- NSW Department of Finance, Services and Innovation
- Insurance and Care NSW (iCare)
- SafeWork NSW
- State Insurance Regulatory Authority
- NSW Ministry of Health
- NSW Department of Education

The level of reporting for 2015/16 by each of these agencies varied. FACS has published a template with the Act implementation guidelines for public sector agencies to assist HSA with annual reporting. Some agencies, but not all provide detailed summaries in their annual reports of actions taken to recognise and increase awareness of the contribution of carers and demonstrate a strong understanding of the objects of the Act and their obligations.

Four agencies did not report on Act compliance in their 2015/16 annual report. Some of these agencies provided evidence in response to FACS' request to provide information on steps taken to comply with their obligations under the Act in 2015/16.

Some Local Councils may also have reporting obligations where they provide services directed at carers or persons being cared for by carers and therefore

meet the definition of a human service agency under the Act. Reporting by Local Councils is not included in this report but will be addressed in future reports. FACS has provided content for the Local Government NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting manual to assist Councils with Act compliance and reporting.

3.1 Summary of 2015/16 Act compliance reporting

The below table summarises feedback from each agency about their 2015/16 annual report on Act compliance.

| Agency | Summary of 2015/16 Act reporting feedback |
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| FACS | <p>The FACS 2015/16 annual report included a two page summary of steps taken to meet its obligations under the Act.</p> <p>Initiatives and projects highlighted in the annual report include:</p> <p>Projects under the <i>NSW Carers Strategy</i> and other initiatives to support carers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the young carer app ‘Who Cares?’ • Ongoing media campaigns to raise awareness of carers (e.g. Care for a Carer) • Development of an interactive website to help carers identify how their caring skills can translate into employable skills (SkillsLink2Work). • \$100,000 funding provided to Carers NSW to administer Carers Week grants of up to \$250, which enabled 330 carer support groups and organisations to host an event for carers during Carers week • 2015 NSW Carers Awards • Engagement of Carers NSW to reach out to ‘hidden carers’ living in social housing • Allocation of more than 1,400 additional flexible respite places for people caring for a person with disability under the <i>Ready Together</i> program • Supported decision making workshops delivered to 14-18 year olds with disability and their families and carers by Carers NSW in partnership with Mirri Mirri • Projects to build the capacity of people with disability, their families and carers in preparation for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). <p>Consultation with carers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with carers and organisations as part of the review of the Act • Management and support of the NSW Carers |

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| | <p style="text-align: center;">Advisory Council</p> <p>Human Resources Policies and Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of a new HR Policy Development Consultation Framework that ensures carers and other diversity groups are included as key stakeholders and subject matter experts during HR policy consultation. • Advocacy to include a questions about carers in the NSW Public Sector People Matter Employee Survey in 2016 • Development of a 2016 FACS Workforce Carers Strategy Action Plan, which includes initiatives to assist carers, including providing information on flexible workplace options for employees and advice on implementing flexible work practices to assist carers in balancing paid employment with carer responsibilities. |
| <p>Ministry of Health</p> | <p>Ministry of Health provided a copy of a comprehensive internal report on 2015/16 compliance with the Act and progress under the <i>NSW Health Carers (Recognition) Act and Carers Strategy Implementation Plan 2013-16</i>.</p> <p>Ministry of Health’s 2015/16 annual report includes a page long summary of activities undertaken to meet its obligations under the Act.</p> <p>Ministry of Health’s internal report provided to FACS reports on progress against all of the 40 actions under the <i>NSW Health Carers (Recognition) Act and Carers Strategy Implementation Plan 2013-2016</i>.</p> <p>Initiatives and projects highlighted in the annual report and internal report provided to FACS include:</p> <p>Projects under the <i>NSW Carers Strategy</i> and other initiatives to support carers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery against key measures of Strategy project 2.1 – easier access to health • Disseminating over 10,000 health promotion resources for the Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service during Carers Week 2015 • Modification of the ‘Stepping On’ falls prevention program to meet the needs of carers and actively promoting this program to carers and carer organisations • Creation of 40 unique carer zones across the new Blacktown Hospital facilities • Launch of the Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network Patient and Carer Experience video created by its |

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| | <p>Families and Consumer Council, which is used to educate staff in corporate orientation and in-services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of six new 'Carer Corners' in Coffs Harbour Health Campus, Macksville Hospital and Bellingen Hospital. • Roll out of the Admission to Discharge Together project that aims to achieve a seamless and safe journey into and out of the health system for people with an intellectual disability and their carers • The Dubbo Koori Yarning Group which provides support for Aboriginal carers in Dubbo and surrounding areas and won a 2016 NSW Carers Award • Promotion of the NSW Carers Charter with the NSW <i>Think Patient, Think Carer</i> resource to all staff through local health district newsletters • Development of resources across all Local Health Districts to ensure all staff understand and act on the NSW Carers Charter principles, including the Who Cares – Sydney Local Health District Carers Program Working Towards a Carer Friendly Health Service brochure and carer awareness packages for nurses and allied health students • Strategies to make it easier for carers to perform their caring roles, including subsidised parking for carers in Central Coast Local Health District and resources on Hepatitis B in Sydney Local Health District targeted at Cantonese and Mandarin speaking carers <p>Consultation with carers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to the 2016 review of the Act and NSW Carers Strategy 2016 progress report • Representation of carers on a range of committees, boards, working groups, panels and time limited projects, including the Rehabilitation Network Co-Design project and the Nutrition Network Hip Fracture project. • Initiatives to increase carer participation in health care including the Northern NSW Local Health District carer consultant program which enables the inclusion of the views of carers in the planning and review of services by linking managers to carers online. • Development of resources for carers to support them in their caring role, including the Mental Health Family and Carer Handbook developed by the Central Coast Local Health District and the Northern Sydney Local Health District Dementia Pathway |
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| | <p>Project which provides guidance to carers around appropriate services and how to access them.</p> <p>Human Resources Policies and Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources policies and resources, surveys and intranet information that reflect the principles of the NSW Carers Charter, including Mid North Coast Local Health District Working Carer Survey and the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District Working Carers Pack that provides a range of relevant information for carers. • Delivery of 43 carers awareness face to face in-services to 401 staff in Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District. • Roll out of the Health Education and Training Institute's online module 'Partnering with Carers' to approximately 800 staff |
| <p>Department of Education</p> | <p>The Department of Education provided an email with details of 2015/16 compliance with the Act.</p> <p>The Department of Education's 2016 annual report included a quarter of a page summary on actions to implement the Act and NSW Carers Charter.</p> <p>Initiatives and projects highlighted in the annual report and email provided to FACS include:</p> <p>Initiatives to support carers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Carers fact sheet, which provides information and links to support services for school communities is available on the Public Schools NSW website • The newly developed learning and wellbeing section of the Department of Education website provides information and links to services for schools supporting students who are carers. • The <i>Being a Carer, Being a Student and Being a Kid</i> resources, which were launched in 2011, are posted on the intranet. They provide information for staff in schools about supporting students who are young carers. • Promotion and recognition of children and young people who are carers through the national Young Carer Bursary Program via the SchoolBiz news platform. <p>Consultation with carers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from the Department of Education participate in the NSW Carers Strategy project management group and have established |

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| | <p>partnerships with Family and Community Services, NSW Railcorp, Carers NSW and other organisations to network and consult on policy and program development</p> <p>Human Resources Policies and Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated intranet page providing information, online resources and useful links for staff who are carers or who work with people who have carer responsibilities. • Provision of 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. During 2016, 60,292 staff accessed flexible work options. An additional 49,082 staff took short-term absences for family and community responsibilities. • Staff with carer responsibilities have access to the Employee Assistance Program, an independent, confidential and free professional counselling service to support employees' health and wellbeing. • Currently exploring options to improve the collection of data on employees who are carers and ensure information is available for monitoring workplace initiatives and public reporting • Implementation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan also involves consideration of the valuable contribution of carers |
| <p>Department of Justice (Response included information relating to NSW Trustee and Guardian and the Anti-Discrimination Board)</p> | <p>The Department of Justice provided details of 2015/16 compliance with the Act using the annual reporting template on request from FACS.</p> <p>Initiatives and projects highlighted in the reporting template provided to FACS include:</p> <p>Initiatives to support carers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 ensures carers are involved in all decision making processes for substitute decisions. • The Anti-Discrimination Board promotes compliance with the <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1977</i>, which protects carers from discrimination in employment, through information on its website and seminars and training on the rights and responsibilities of carers and their employers. |

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| | <p>Consultation with carers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Anti Discrimination Board promotes carers' rights via social media platforms and when engaging with stakeholders through its community engagement opportunities • The Anti Discrimination Board partnered with Carers NSW to provide community awareness programs and articles for publication in the Carers NSW magazine <p>Human Resources Policies and Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW Trustee and Guardian maintains information on its intranet for all staff on the Act • The Department of Justice maintains an intranet page on workforce diversity for carers, which details information for carers, including access to the flexible working hour arrangements and agreements. • Carers are invited to be members of the Disability Employee Network • The Department of Justice has consulted and negotiated a new flexible working agreement with the Public Service Association, combining 12 separate agreements across all Divisions and Offices into one. Once implemented, this agreement will further support employees to maintain their caring roles. |
| NSW Ombudsman | <p>The NSW Ombudsman 2015/16 annual report included a half page summary of strategies implemented to meet its obligations under the Act.</p> <p>Initiatives and projects highlighted in the annual report include:</p> <p>Initiatives to support carers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of the NSW Ombudsman carers recognition policy to all staff and posting on the website. • Information about the Act and the NSW Carers Charter provided to staff via email and promotional materials in the office • Participation in community events such as the Carers Day Out to promote the rights of people with disability and their carers and increase awareness about how to make a complaint. <p>Consultation with carers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained regular contact with peak carers organisations via existing consultative platforms and through core business work in overseeing the |

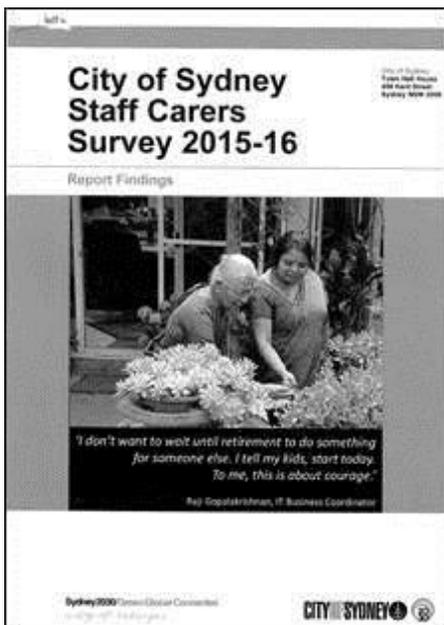
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| | <p>provision of community services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided a free tailored workshop <i>The rights stuff - tips for solving problems and making complaints</i> to users of community services and their carers. <p>Human Resources Policies and Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoted and made available to staff a range of policies that support employees who are carers – including flexible working hours, working from home, and family and community services leave policies. • Continued to review relevant human resources policies to ensure that staff with caring responsibilities are valued and appropriately supported. |
| <p>State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA)</p> | <p>SIRA provided a letter with details of 2015/16 compliance with the Act, and indicated that in future they will publish details in annual reports,</p> <p>The letter provided to FACS included the following activities in relation to carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback is sought from carers’ associations, when developing guidelines related to treatment, care and support for injured people. • Customer service is delivered in a way that recognises the customer may be the injured person’s carer. • SIRA staff are employees of the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation (DFSI) which supports flexible work arrangements and provides a range of employee carer and family support arrangements and resources • DFSI has also established a Diversity Council, supported by Employee Reference Groups, including a group for carers. |
| <p>icare</p> | <p>icare provided a letter with details of 2015/16 compliance with the Act, and indicated that in future they will publish details in annual reports,</p> <p>The letter provided to FACS included the following activities in relation to carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training is provided to frontline staff on carer awareness from Carers NSW. • Participants, their families and carers are consulted in co-designing new processes and policies through the Optimal Care Program. • Partnership with Carers NSW in the “we care” program, developing new services to support families |

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| | <p>and carers across icare service lines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Active engagement with family and carers to assess and plan participant support through the “My Plan” process. |
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3.2 Examples of good practice

Since the Act commenced in 2010 public sector agencies have implemented a range of initiatives and projects to meet their obligations under the Act. Below are some examples of good practice compliance with the Act by public sector agencies:

City of Sydney - Staff Carers Survey 2015-16 and Intranet Content



In 2015-16 City of Sydney surveyed all staff about their experiences as a carer and their experiences working at City of Sydney.

A major finding of the survey was that carers were concerned when they started new a role about whether they would be supported by their managers to access flexible work practices.

With the results of the survey, City of Sydney redesigned its approach to workplace flexibility – to be inclusive of carers (alongside other diversity groups).

The City of Sydney intranet has also been updated with resources for staff with carer responsibilities including information about the

City of Sydney supports employees who are carers. The intranet content collates a range of useful information for carers in one easy to access online place.

icare – carer initiatives

icare has recognised the importance of carers in people’s recovery and rehabilitation.

icare runs a number of carer initiatives with the support of Carers NSW, including:

- Mentoring carers program - where experienced mentors work alongside family carers through 6-8 mentoring sessions providing information and support in caring role.
- Children and Young people program – for school age (5-18 year olds) carers delivered over 4-8 wks. This program is flexible and tailored to meet the individual needs of the carer.

South Western Sydney Local Health District - Carers Program

The Carers Program was established in the South Western Sydney Local Health District to improve responsiveness to the needs of carers and the people they care for within local health district facilities by educating health staff, promoting carer participation and providing information and resources.

The [Information for Carers Booklet](#) released in March 2017 provides information about services and support for carers and families.

The Liverpool hospital carers corner is another successful local project facilitated by the carers program. It was a consumer led project based on feedback that there was no pleasant place in the hospital for carers to take a break from the ward. The carers corner now has comfortable, accessible seating, information, amenities and provides a pleasant environment for carers.



Ministry of Health - Consultation with carers on hospital design and redevelopment

Ministry of Health continues to involve carers at different stages of consultation and design of hospital redevelopment. In five NSW Hospitals carers were consulted about physical design, planning for new facilities and visiting hour policies.

2016-17 projects where carers were involved include

- Westmead Hospital - Carers consulted on Stage 1 co-design for single rooms that incorporate a Carer Zone.
- Nepean Hospital – Carer representative engaged in Front of House Unit Functional Design Brief

- Bulli Hospital – Carer involved in the working group and consultation for the proposed Aged Care hospital.
- Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospitals – Carers provided input on the Visiting Hours policy that was implemented in May 2016. The visiting hours have been extended from 8am to 8pm for general visitors and carers have open visiting hours 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Department of Family and Community Services – Converge Carers Week Campaign

FACS contracts Converge International to provide the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) program. This program provides confidential counselling, coaching and support for workplace and personal issues.

During Carers Week 2016 Converge International ran a campaign with FACS and produced posters that were distributed across FACS offices in NSW. The posters highlighted that many employees may have caring responsibilities and that their colleagues and Converge International could offer them support.



Caring takes teamwork

National Carers Week is our chance to recognise and thank those in our community who give their time to care for others. So much of their work goes unrecognised.

There could be someone on your team who is balancing their commitment to work and to caring.

Family & Community Services staff who have a caring role can access support any time by calling our Employee Assistance Program on 1300 OUR EAP (1300 687 327).

To get involved in National Carers Week visit www.careforacarer.nsw.gov.au



Family & Community Services

CARE FOR A CARER



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Family & Community Services

CARE FOR A CARER

