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Progress Report 2017

This summary reports on progress under the Strategy in 2016-17 and outlines key directions for future implementation of the Strategy. It highlights and profiles four key projects that are making practical differences to the lives of carers in NSW.

Introduction

Since the Progress Report 2016, we have made significant progress towards improved support for carers and increased recognition of the awareness of the important contributions carers make to society. To enable carers to maintain their capacity to care, Strategy implementation has focused on improving access to timely and relevant information and access to supports that will improve employment, education, health and wellbeing outcomes for carers.

Since the Strategy launched in 2014, there have been significant developments in the aged care, mental health and disability legislative contexts and service systems. This includes the Review of the Carers (Recognition Act) 2010, ongoing rollout of the NDIS across NSW, reform of the aged care system and ongoing development by the Commonwealth Government of the Carer Gateway and the proposed Integrated Carer Support Service. These reforms impact on carers, while implementation of the Strategy occurs in the broader context of these changes to policy and legislation that affect carers.

The Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) review of the Carers (Recognition Act) 2010 in 2016 highlighted the need to provide clearer information to carers about available complaints handling mechanisms for carers, and clearer information to public sector agencies about the Act and Charter and about their compliance and reporting requirements. FACS will be implementing the recommendations of the Act review in the final two years of implementation of the Strategy, and this will contribute to achievement of Strategy goals.

The Carers Strategy Progress Report 2017 builds on the Progress Report 2016. This report includes:

- **Highlight projects:**
  2.1 Easier access to health care
  3.4 Information for carers in Aboriginal communities
  4.1 Partners in care (health care)
  5.1 Improving the evidence base- including highlight carer data.

- Initiatives complementing the Carers Strategy - including the Carer Investment Program and the implementation of the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 following its review.

- Next Steps.
Highlight projects

2.1 Easier access to health care

Lead agency and partners:
NSW Health.

Project description:
This project brings together a number of different NSW Health initiatives to make health care services more accessible to carers.

Progress and key achievements:

Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service

- NSW Health continues to support improved access for carers to health services via a range of programs. This is primarily achieved through promoting carer uptake of the Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service https://www.gethealthynsw.com.au and the Stepping On falls prevention program.
- An information sheet about the needs of carers was developed and distributed to all coaches at the Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service. This enabled coaches to better engage with carers who had enquiries or wanted to register to participate in the program.
“I joined the Get Healthy Service after experiencing a significant loss in my life and my circumstances were suddenly very different. I mainly wanted to be healthier and if I lost some weight in the process, that was a bonus.

The regular coaching sessions really helped me gain a better understanding of my relationship with food. I’ve introduced a lot more vegetables into our family’s diet and I now realise that our portion sizes were far bigger than they should be. I have also acquired a step counter and now take the stairs instead of the lift and walk more than I used to.

While I was actively caring I always placed my needs last, I was tired most of the time and ate meals for comfort and food that was easily available. My fridge and pantry were always stocked with “treats” because my home had a constant stream of visitors and I convinced myself that all of the food I was buying was for others when in fact I ate most of it myself.

My Get Healthy Coach really understood my circumstances. We talked about the obstacles that could stop me sticking to my plan and worked out ways to manage these obstacles. I would highly recommend this Service for anyone who would like to become healthy or even just gain a better understanding about their food and exercise habits. When I had a slip up, I was honest with my coach and we would discuss what had occurred and work out a plan and ideas that would help me to stick with it next time. I also recall one time when I was so upset and my coach was so supportive and kind to me. I very much appreciate her kindness and understanding.

I completed the program and found the support so useful that I have re-enrolled to continue to achieve my goals. I have lost a few kilograms and several centimetres from my waist. My clothes fit me much better now and I feel so much more confident when shopping to try on styles which I would not have been able to previously. I have less aches and pains and am much more flexible and have more energy.”

Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service - Carer testimonial (de-identified)

Next steps:

- A brochure specifically targeting carers was developed for the Stepping On program. It promotes what the program is about, who can join, when the program is held, the personal benefits, and facts about falls. Details for a local Stepping On program contact can be included on the brochure for carers to find out more and register.

- In 2016-17, there were 423 Stepping On programs delivered in NSW and 4,678 adults over the age of 65 years completed the program, meaning they attended at least five of the seven available sessions.
Carers’ involvement in the co-design of hospital redevelopments

- NSW Health continues to involve carers at different stages of consultation and design of hospital redevelopments. Examples of projects in 2016-2017 where carers have been 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 – Carers 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. 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.

3.4 Information for carers in Aboriginal communities

Lead agency and partners:
Department of Family and Community Services with the Aboriginal Carers Strategy working party.

Project description:
This project aims to help Aboriginal people to document and share key information about a person’s care needs.

Progress and key achievements:
- In consultation with the Carers Strategy Aboriginal working party (convened by FACS), Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre Aboriginal Corporation developed four Emergency Department templates to document key information about a person’s care needs, including their health and medical needs, and emergency and respite contacts. The templates have been designed to allow the information to be easily shared with others, including family members and service organisations providing care.
- Yarkuwa staff supported local carers in Deniliquin to complete their chosen template/s and update the information as needed. Through this pilot process, Yarkuwa staff identified the need to provide a range of options ranging from a basic template to a more detailed option.
• The emergency plans also come in a variety of formats including a printed care plan, USB bracelet and fold out wallet card. It is proposed that these will be piloted more broadly in Aboriginal communities.

4.1 Partners in care (health care)

Lead agency and partners:
NSW Health.

Project description:
This project aims to improve the ways carers are involved as partners in health care delivered to the people they care for.

Progress and achievements:

**Progress on improvements to carer identification**

• The Ministry has been working with the NSW Health State Forms Management Committee, local health districts and eHealth NSW to include mandatory questions identifying a carer in all patient administration systems. Consistent mandatory self-identification of the carer as a Person to Contact will foster action by NSW Health staff to include the carer as a partner in the health care team.

• This project seeks to ensure that consistent carer contact information is collected when people come into hospital, and that this carer contact information will print onto NSW Health inpatient, outpatient and Emergency Department documents and be available in all other systems, including Powerchart for use by NSW Health clinicians.

• The changes aim to recognise that partnering with patients and their carers provides better outcomes for the patient and minimises the risk of avoidable admissions to hospital. Identification of carers will also assist the health system to better direct resources according to identified needs, delivering better value for money in relation to activities that will support carers.

• The Ministry is working with eHealth NSW and local health districts to develop timelines for implementation of the enhancements to NSW Health patient administration systems from January 2018. Following this, the Ministry will support implementation of new business processes by NSW Health administration staff to record at registration if the patient is a carer or has a carer.
5.1 Improving the evidence base

Lead agency and partners:
The Department of Family and Community Services (FACS).

Project description:
This project aims to consolidate evidence on Carers Strategy focus areas and identify ways it can inform policy and practice.

Progress and achievements:
Building the carer evidence base involves building new data sets and identifying and highlighting existing carer data by making it available and accessible to those involved in developing policies and programs that impact on carers. In the last 12 months, we have done the following to improve the evidence base:

• In 2016, the Public Service Commission’s People Matter Employee Survey included a demographic question about caring. The aim is to use this data to better understand public sector employees who also have caring responsibilities.

• Will include an infographic with results from the People Matter survey.

• Recommendation 2 of the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 Review was that ‘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’. The first collated annual report will be provided to the Minister for Disability Services in 2018. This will help to establish a benchmark for future reporting and assist in monitoring change over time in NSW Government carer-related policy and practice.

• The biennial Carers NSW Carer Survey is the leading survey on carers’ support needs and caring experiences anywhere in Australia. Since the commencement of the Carers Strategy in 2014, the response rate has increased from approximately 1,600 in 2014 to over 2,000 in 2016. More information about the survey is available at http://www.carersnsw.org.au/research/survey

• In March 2017, the first edition of the new International Journal of Care and Caring included a commissioned article ‘Co-design of a carers strategy for New South Wales: Reflections on a new approach to collaborative policy making for carers’.

Insights from the existing carer evidence base:

• The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) Longitudinal Study of Australian Children 2016 Annual Statistical Report included a chapter on young carers. The research found that young carers have significantly lower performance in both Reading and Numeracy in NAPLAN at Year X compared to their classroom peers. The full chapter of the report is available from the AIFS website https://aifs.gov.au/media-releases/young-carers-fall-behind-school
905,000 Carers in NSW

Primary carers in NSW population pyramid

Data from other Carers Strategy projects

Project 3.1 Media campaigns to raise the profile of carers

• Carers Week events are an ongoing feature of broader carer awareness campaigns. Since the Strategy commenced in 2014, there has been steady growth in the number and reach of Carers Week events and people attending events in NSW.

• 370 events were held in 2014, attracting around 8,300 people. 436 events were held in 2016 attracting 13,500 people (including 9,000 carers).

• In 2017, 535 events held across NSW, with more “hidden” carer groups, such as male and Aboriginal carers, holding events.

Project 3.3 Young Carer mobile application (app)

• Through the young carer app project Who Cares?, three animations have been developed, based on real stories of young carers. The animations have been viewed on social media 17,347 times since their release. These animations are available on the FACS and Carers NSW Young Carer You Tube channels https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCOdJSsf_33UnZnjNBXe6Rw and https://www.youtube.com/user/facsnsw/videos.

Project 1.2 Recognising carers’ skills

• Since the beginning of April 2017, the SkillsLink2Work website has been visited 2,827 times and 500 users have completed 707 sessions.
Initiatives for carers complementing the Carers Strategy

Carers Investment Program
FACS is reinvesting existing carer grant funding in line with the Strategy focus areas.

- The Carers Investment Program (CIP) will see $5.6 million (over three years) directed to projects that propose new solutions under the five focus areas of the Strategy or support the delivery or evaluation of existing projects in the Strategy.
- A two-stage procurement process commenced in October 2017, with funding to commence in 2018/19.

Implementation of the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 and recommendations of the 2016 statutory review
- The Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 formally acknowledges the significant role and contributions of carers to the community and underpins the NSW Government’s commitment to recognising and supporting carers.
- In 2016, the NSW Government conducted a statutory review of the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 in consultation with over 800 people and 50 organisations. The final report was tabled in Parliament on 8 November 2016. Three of the ten recommendations made in the report proposed minor legislative amendments, which were subsequently made and assented on 1 June 2017.
- The amendments included a revision of 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 of the NSW Carers Advisory Council.
- To date, over 8,000 posters of the revised Carers Charter have been distributed. The Charter has been translated into seven community languages available for download on the FACS website [https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/inclusion/carers/carers-act](https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/inclusion/carers/carers-act)
- The recommendations of the review of the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 continue to be implemented. Further progress will be published here.

Next steps
- The Progress Report 2018 will report on progress against all remaining Strategy projects.
Para obtener más información acerca del apoyo a los cuidadores contacte con:

1. Лицам, осуществляющим уход, следует оказывать помощь в поддержании их здоровья и благосостояния.
2. Лицам, осуществляющим уход, обладают всеми правами, вариантами выбора и возможностями, что и все прочие австралийцы.
3. Лица, осуществляющие уход, отличаются друг от друга, у них имеются разнообразные нужды, которые должны быть признаны и учтены.
4. Лицам, осуществляющим уход, следует уделять особое внимание их уникальным знаниям и опыту, которые они предоставляют.

NSW (Recognition) Act 2010

Estatuto de los cuidadores de NSW

Bản Tờ chì

La política, los programas y la prestación de servicios deben reconocer a los cuidadores y más allá.

Los conocimientos y experiencia únicos de los cuidadores deben ser valorados y reconocidos.

Los cuidadores deben tener los mismos derechos, opciones y oportunidades que cualquier otro ciudadano.

Los cuidadores son socios en los cuidados.

NSW reconoce la valiosa contribución social y económica de los cuidadores.

Cuidar de los demás es un valor social y económico importante.

NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010