



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

2017-18 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 2017-18.

A detailed collation of all activities reported by these agencies in 2017-18 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 2017-18 annual reporting by six NSW Government agencies and departments, and 66 local government areas. There has been a promising range of activities reported in 2017-18 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 66 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:

- A significant increase in the number of councils that have reported increased activity in supporting carers, from 25 in 2016/17 to 66 in 2017/18.
- An increase human resources policies and practice across most organisations.
- Examples of embedding consultation with carers are part of core business, including consulting with carers to enhance the provision of health services and improve patient care.

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 NSW Health recognition and support for carers key directions 2018-2020

The Ministry of Health released the *NSW Health recognition and support for carers key directions 2018-2020* to provide system-wide guidance on responding to the needs of carers across the NSW public health system. Its vision is that:

NSW Health and its employees recognise the important role of carers and respond to their needs, so that carers feel valued, respected, engaged and supported in the NSW public health system.

It sets out three key directions and a range of actions that will be implemented to achieve the vision across the NSW public health system:

- Key direction 1: NSW Health will inform and guide its employees to recognise and support carers
- Key direction 2: NSW Health employees will value and engage with carers as partners in care
- Key direction 3: NSW Health will support employees who have caring responsibilities.

3.1.1.2 NSW Family and Carer Mental Health Program – Ministry of Health

NSW Family and Carer Mental Health Program focuses on delivery of

- The delivery of Family Friendly Mental Health Services - supporting and training staff to include explicitly families and carers in the service system and be responsive to their unique needs;
- Mental Health Family and Carer Support Programs - direct support services delivered through NGOs that provide education and training to build coping skills and resilience, individual support and advocacy, and infrastructure support for peer support groups; and
- Improving access to Generic Family and Carer Supports.

In 2017/18, the Ministry of Health provided grants to Aftercare for \$776,700, Centacare Wilcannia-Forbes for \$787,400, Mission Australia for \$782,900, Uniting Recovery - Parramatta Mission for \$1,567,900 and the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW for \$2,417,300 to deliver the NSW Family and Carer Mental Health Program.

3.1.1.3 Local council initiatives

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

- Through the Community Grants Program council, the Georges River Council awarded \$10,000 to the Carer Support Service to undertake the Resilient Carer Program. This includes skills-based workshops for dealing with the stresses and difficulties of full time caring for a loved one.
- Council's Community Care Carer Support Program provides informal counselling, information, support and advocacy to 38 carers. This support to carers is through one on one informal counselling, carer support groups, information through literature and education sessions (Parramatta City Council).
- Complimentary entry for carers of people with a disability at Five Dock Leisure Centre, golf courses and swimming centres (City of Canada Bay).
- Community Connections Hot Desk provides referral and information service with a diverse range of scheduled topics and service providers, connecting the community to local services (Hornsby Library).
- Train the Trainer Peer support program as part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Transition Training. Since the program was established, volunteers have become an NDIS 'buddy' to fellow carers who are starting out with NDIS (Fairfield Council).

3.1.2 Consultation and liaison with carers

3.1.2.1 Top5 – Clinical Excellence Commission

The Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) continued to strengthen systems and programs that enable consumers to engage with clinicians for better care. Strategic priority for 2017/18 was to foster engagement from consumers and carers to improve the customer experience. Their TOP5 program, that supports carer involvement in dementia care, continued to spread. TOP 5 is a simple process that encourages health professionals to engage with carers to gain valuable non-clinical information to help personalise care. This information is documented on a TOP 5 form and made available to every member of the care team to improve communication between the patient, the carer and the health care team.

3.1.2.2 FACS – Carers Advisory Council

The Carers Advisory Council was established under the Act to advance the interests of carers in NSW and to advise on legislation, policy and other matters that impact carers. FACS provides secretariat support to the Council.

As stipulated in the Act, the majority of the Council members are carers.

As well as continuing to promote the implementation of the Act, the Council has identified a number of priorities, including:

- providing advice on the NDIS to ensure it is responsive to carers
- understanding the concerns of hard-to-reach carers, including Aboriginal and CALD carers
- understanding, and identifying solutions to address, the social and emotional health needs of carers

The Council has provided advice on the Guardianship Act review, the design of the Australian Government's Integrated Carer Support Service and the review of the Act, including the revised Carers Charter. As a result of amendments to the Act, an independent Chair and Deputy Chair were appointed in December 2017. During 2017–18, the Carers Advisory Council's NDIS working group and Disability Council have worked together on joint issues.

3.1.3 Human resources policies and practice

3.1.3.1 iCare

iCare provides support to permanent employees who are carers by providing Carer's Leave which can be used in circumstances where someone they care for becomes ill or injured. Carer's Leave can include caring for children or the elderly. The organisation also provides permanent employees with Family and Community Services leave (2.5 days per year in the first and second years of employment and then one day each year thereafter) for any unplanned and emergency family responsibilities or other emergencies such as illness of a family member or cancellation of child care.

3.1.3.2 Tafe NSW

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.



4 Strategies to support future reporting

In 2019 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 2017/18 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.

Appendix: A

Human service agency support for carers as detailed in 2017/18 Annual Reports

TAFE NSW

Initiatives to support carers

- As a human services and public sector agency under the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 (NSW), 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.

Human resources policies and practice

- 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. We provide information to carers about the flexible arrangements available in response to inquiries.
- During 2017–18, up to 3,878 TAFE NSW staff (70 per cent of whom were women) accessed flexible work options. These include up to 2,662 staff taking short-term absences to meet family and community responsibilities.
- 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 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.
- During 2017-18, TAFE NSW has actively participated on the Public Service Commission (PSC) coordinated Flexible Working Committee. Although not exclusively concerned with Carers, the flexibility commonly needed by Carers is a significant part of the Committee and its output. TAFE NSW managers have critiqued and provided feedback to a PSC promotional campaign aimed at increasing awareness of flexible work arrangements.
- The TAFE NSW Executive Leadership Team has approved the TAFE Diversity Inclusion Plan (Plan). One of the pillars of the Plan relates to transition to retirement. One of the reasons why transition to retirement has been included is to provide employees approaching or considering retirement the flexibility needed to both continue working while caring for grandchildren.
- Flexible Working Procedure written direction is planned for 2018-19. After appropriate consultation, this will clearly state TAFE NSW's approach to flexible working, which will include flexibility options needed by carers.

NSW Department of Education

Initiatives to support carers

- Our action plan to implement the NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 also reflects the principles of the NSW Carers Charter in business activities. There is a dedicated page on our internal website, with information, online resources and useful links for staff who are carers, or who work with people who have carer responsibilities.
- We continued to post information relating to young carers in the student wellbeing section of our website, and this page provides links to Carers NSW. It also provides 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.
- In 2017, we provided \$1.06 million for Tunin' In, an early years education initiative, to help Aboriginal parents and carers with children in preschool support their child's learning. This involved engaging 25 community engagement officers (Aboriginal) and using a social media platform.
- We promoted and celebrated a number of corporate events to raise diversity awareness and to encourage inclusive practices. These included Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week, Carers Week, World Refugee Week, International Women's Day, Harmony Day, RUOK? Day and International Day of People with Disability.
- We promote and support disability awareness and inclusive practices through key organisational strategies.
- During 2017, we helped staff and stakeholders understand the role and purpose of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), including delivering more than 275 NDIS training and information sessions to school staff, parents and carers, and NDIS providers.

Consultation with carers

- We are committed to continuous improvement of our services and their accessibility for students, staff, parents and carers with disability. We developed the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2016-2020 in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including employees with disability, disability groups, parents and carers, and principal representatives.
- The plan complies with the requirements of the state Disability Inclusion Act 2014, and is consistent with the objectives of the national Disability Discrimination Act 1992. It sets out more than 40 actions for improving disability access and inclusion across four areas of focus.
- We reviewed our early childhood education disability programs. From 2018, the Start Strong Disability and Inclusion Program will focus on building the capacity of the early childhood education sector to support children with disability and additional needs. To help us develop a new model of inclusive practice, we consulted with educators, parents and carers, and advocacy groups.
- The Feedback Assist widget went live on our website in October 2017, enabling parents and carers, and others to make complaints, give compliments and provide suggestions online. We also began work on developing additional complaints-related resources for parents of students with disability.
- 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.
- In 2017, 2,327 onsite and 3,387 telephone interpreters facilitated communication between schools and parents and carers who do not speak or understand English well, are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment.

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 85 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.
- We offer a wide range of flexible work practices to help staff balance their work and other responsibilities more effectively. This is also an important means to address work-life balance for staff with carer responsibilities, as well as work-related adjustment needs for staff with disability. In 2017, we published the Flexible Work Arrangements for Corporate Employees Policy and the Alternative Workplace Arrangements Procedure to support flexible work practices in corporate offices.
- In 2017, 61,834 staff (84.7 per cent of whom were women) accessed flexible work options, including permanent and temporary part-time work, job sharing, leave without pay and varying flexible hour arrangements. An additional 51,582 staff (78.5 per cent of whom were women) took short-term absences for family and community responsibilities.
- We initially rolled out the new NSW Public School Leadership and Management Credential in 2016. From Term 3, 2017, new principals are required to complete the credential, which includes their obligations to students with disability and their parents and carers. We also worked to further increase principals' participation in Disability Standards for Education training.

NSW Department of Family and Community Services

Initiatives to support carers

- During 2017–18 we continued to progress landmark reforms, including the National Disability Insurance Scheme – a transformational reform to enable people with disability, their families and carers to access individually tailored and flexible supports so they can achieve their goals and participate fully in their communities.
- Carers Investment Program - On 15 June 2018, the NSW Government announced the Carers Investment Program, involving an investment of \$5.6 million over three years in innovative projects to support carers in NSW.
- Fourteen projects were successful in obtaining funding and are to deliver evidence-based outcomes aligned with carer priorities as identified in the NSW Carers Strategy 2014-19.
- Included in the successful projects are initiatives that focus on young carers, CALD carers and Aboriginal carers. Detailed information on the successful projects is available at www.facs.nsw.gov.au
- Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 review - The Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 was introduced to provide recognition of carers. It includes a Carers Charter with 13 principles that affirm the valuable contribution that carers make and provides guidance to NSW Government departments, local councils and the broader community on issues of significance for carers.

- Section 15 of the Act requires that the Act be reviewed after it has been in operation for five years. This review was concluded in 2016 and the final report included 10 recommendations.
- During 2017–18, FACS commenced implementing these recommendations, including increasing people’s awareness of the charter, for example, by developing an easy-to-read version of the Carers Charter and an Aboriginal-designed version of the Charter.
- FACS also began working with Carers NSW to implement Recommendation 1 of the review (to facilitate access for carers about carer protections in other legislation and complaints mechanisms). This included plans to establish a Carers Rights and Complaints Network with representation from a number of relevant organisations who are working together to develop improved information and understanding about carers.
- Companion Card - The Companion Card program (funded by FACS and delivered by National Disability Services NSW) supports people with severe and lifelong disability to participate in the community, by providing free access to venues and events for a companion. At 30 June 2018, there were more than 27,000 cardholders in NSW.
- Ability Links - FACS continued to fund non-government organisations and joint working arrangements to deliver Ability Links NSW (ALNSW). ALNSW supports people with disability and their carers and families in the ongoing reforms of the disability system in NSW, with 347 Linker positions across NSW, including 74 Aboriginal specific Linkers and 79 Early Linkers.
- Linkers work closely with people with disability, their families and carers to support them to fulfil their goals, hopes and dreams, linking them to community organisations, mainstream services or businesses in their local community that will assist them to achieve their goals.
- Linkers consult with people with disability and their carers and families to:
 - support them to navigate between the specialist and mainstream systems, reducing the friction between systems and ensuring people do not fall through the gaps
 - listen to and understand their goals and the challenges they face in achieving them
 - encourage people to see and build on the strengths of people with disability and, where necessary, unpack and dispel negative messages they have received about their capabilities
 - build their confidence to connect with their community
 - work in partnership, empowering people to identify opportunities, connect, develop their networks and make positive changes in their lives
 - support people to plan for the future, develop a long-term vision and reach for their dreams.
- Educational strategies to promote awareness of carers - The Carers Team at FACS developed a significant amount of new promotional and awareness raising resources in 2017–18, including:
 - a 30-second video to be run in GP clinics across NSW in October 2018
 - carers brochures to be distributed in GP clinics from August to November
 - a refresh of the structure and content on the careforacarers.nsw.gov.au website
 - Aboriginal artwork for the Carers Charter
 - a carer facts poster and a young carer poster
 - developing four types of carer postcards.
- The AHO promoted awareness of carers by:
 - distributing Carers NSW pamphlets to clients
 - assisting in designing assessment tools for carers and clients who were transitioning to the NDIS and sharing these throughout the state
 - developing culturally appropriate resources for NDIS education workshops at yarn ups

- assisting an NGO to set up a carers support page on Facebook
 - supporting NGO-facilitated awareness training for carers
 - facilitating referrals to Carers NSW for clients
 - liaising with multiple carers as Services Our Way clients.
- NSW Carers Week 2017 - Carers Week is an annual national awareness week held in mid-October. In 2017 it was celebrated between 15 and 21 October.
 - FACS runs the NSW Carers Awards annually to recognise and acknowledge individuals and organisations across the state. The recipients of the 2017 awards were announced during Carers Week.
 - In 2017, the NSW Carer of the Year was Alan Gravolin from Epping. Alan has cared for his wife, Lyn, who has early onset dementia, for many years and also volunteers for Alzheimer's Australia NSW and with BaptistCare, where, as a 'carer coach', he supports other people who are caring for someone at home with dementia.
 - Gladys Panoncillo from Mount Druitt, Lauren Mott from Terrigal, Maree Brindley from Heathcote, Carol Dolan from Goulburn and Kim Pow from The Entrance also received individual Carers Awards this year. The Sutherland Shire Carer Support Service and the Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra received organisation awards.
 - In 2017, FACS again funded Carers NSW to administer the Carers Week grants program. This funding supported more than 535 events for carers across the state in Carers Week.
 - Carers Week events are crucial for reaching 'hidden' carers, that is, people who are carers but who have not previously reached out for support in their caring role.
 - FACS Disability Inclusion continued to lead a number of policy issues which support people with disability and their carers. This work includes:
 - Liveable Communities grants
 - providing guidance to government and councils on disability inclusion action planning
 - continuing to work with Local Government to implement 'Lift & Change' accessible adult changing facilities.

Consultation with carers

- FACS coordinates and leads the implementation of the NSW Carers Strategy 2014–19. A second progress report was provided to the Social Policy Senior Officers Group, and published on the FACS website in January 2018.
- A steering committee with representation from the NSW Ministry of Health, Carers NSW, the Mental Health Commission, the Department of Social Services and the NSW Carers Advisory Council is guiding the implementation of the Strategy.
- Consulting carers of social housing tenants - As part of the Social Housing Management Transfer program, tenants are invited to attend joint drop-in session events and are able to bring their carer and/or advocate. Special consideration is given to tenants with mobility issues, for example by offering them a joint home visit by FACS and the community housing provider.
- In relation to the Communities Plus relocations program, carers are consulted as part of the process of assessing each tenant's needs prior to new accommodation offers being made. This includes consideration of mobility needs and any modifications required, in consultation with carers and medical health professionals.

- Aboriginal Housing Office consultations to support Aboriginal carers during 2017–18 included:
- NSW Aboriginal NDIS yarn ups across NSW, funded by FACS and facilitated by Services Our Way staff.
- Organising committees formed with carers as members to assist with yarn ups.
- Establishing carer support groups.
- Recommending that AHO clients become members of Care NSW so that Aboriginal voices are heard.
- Carers Advisory Council - The Carers Advisory Council was established under the Act to advance the interests of carers in NSW and to advise on legislation, policy and other matters that impact carers. FACS provides secretariat support to the Council. As stipulated in the Act, the majority of the Council members are carers.
- As well as continuing to promote the implementation of the Act, the Council has identified a number of priorities, including:
 - providing advice on the NDIS to ensure it is responsive to carers
 - understanding the concerns of hard-to-reach carers, including Aboriginal and CALD carers
 - understanding, and identifying solutions to address, the social and emotional health needs of carers
- The Council has provided advice on the Guardianship Act review, the design of the Australian Government's Integrated Carer Support Service and the review of the Act, including the revised Carers Charter. As a result of amendments to the Act, an independent Chair and Deputy Chair were appointed in December 2017.
- During 2017–18, the Carers Advisory Council's NDIS working group and Disability Council have worked together on joint issues.

Human resources policies and practice

- During 2017–18, FACS ensured 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
 - continuing to offer a dedicated carers page on the FACS intranet which contains information about the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 and its relevance to employees and provides resources to support employees with carer responsibilities
 - consulting and engaging with employees with carer responsibilities on people policy development and review under the FACS People Policy Development Consultation Framework
 - promoting National Carers Week across FACS to acknowledge and thank employees with carer responsibilities for their contribution to those they care for and the broader community
 - establishing a FACS Flexible Work Practices Working Group to review flexible work role design, build manager capability and related behavioural change initiatives, design flexible work metrics, and develop communication and change strategies
 - continuing to participate actively in the NSW Public Service Commission's work on developing a flexible working strategy for the sector.

NSW Ministry of Health

Initiatives to support carers

- The Ministry of Health released the NSW Health recognition and support for carers key directions 2018-2020 to provide system-wide guidance on responding to the needs of carers across the NSW public health system. Its vision is that NSW Health and its employees recognise the important role of carers and respond to their needs, so that carers feel valued, respected, engaged and supported in the NSW public health system. It sets out three key directions and a range of actions that will be implemented to achieve the vision across the NSW public health system:
- Key direction 1: NSW Health will inform and guide its employees to recognise and support carers
- Key direction 2: NSW Health employees will value and engage with carers as partners in care
- Key direction 3: NSW Health will support employees who have caring responsibilities.
- The Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) continued to strengthen systems and programs that enable consumers to engage with clinicians for better care. The CEC's TOP5 program, supporting carer involvement in dementia care, continued to spread.
- The Ministry of Health provided grants to Aftercare for \$776,700, Centacare Wilcannia-Forbes for \$787,400, Mission Australia for \$782,900, Uniting Recovery - Parramatta Mission for \$1,567,900 and the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW for \$2,417,300 as part of the NSW Family and Carer Mental Health Program.
- The Ministry of Health provided grants to Community Carers Accommodation South East Inc. for \$300,000 to provide Community Carers Accommodation.
- The Ministry of Health provided Mental Health Australia Ltd. for \$20,943 for the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum 2017/18 and Waldronsmith Management \$25,000 in Support Funding for Carers and Consumers to attend the Australian Psychosis Conference to be held in Sydney.
- Provided \$1,055,222 and \$1,192,384 to UCA – Parramatta Mission Seven Hills and Penrith respectively for the Likemind program. This service is for adults with mental health concerns, as well as their families and carers. It brings together clinical and psychosocial services, including mental health, drug and alcohol, primary health and social services in collaboration with local health districts and non-government organisations to provide seamless person-centred care.
- Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District ran a carers program.

Consultation with carers

- The Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) continued to strengthen systems and programs that enable consumers to engage with clinicians for better care. Strategic priority for 2017/18 was to foster engagement from consumers and carers to improve the customer experience. Their TOP5 program, that supports carer involvement in dementia care, continued to spread.

iCare

Initiatives to support carers

iCare values the importance of families and carers and is committed to their better recognition and support. Our organisation abides by the NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 and the legislation is included in our compliance management program. The Act is also displayed in all iCare offices.

In the past year, our support for carers has been demonstrated through several initiatives.

- Representation on working groups and advisory committees, ongoing consultation with participants, families and carers to co-design new processes, policies and services.
- Funding initiatives that support families and carers of participants including The Carers Way Ahead, an online program that provides training to manage challenging behaviours, and the Strength-2-Strength program for family members of those who have sustained a spinal cord injury or traumatic brain injury.
- Expansion of the We Care program across iCare service lines, providing support services to over 70 family members and carers referred to the program over the last twelve months.

iCare Foundation Grants

Through the iCare Foundation grant program Carers NSW was awarded a grant for \$208, 636 for an Adult carer coaching program to provide support services to children, siblings and family carers of severely injured people, to increase their resilience, knowledge, connections and wellbeing.

Through the iCare Foundation grant program UNSW was awarded a grant for \$67,043 for the “The Way Ahead” program which provides online support for families managing challenging behaviours. This project aims to adapt an existing on-line therapy program “This Way UP”, designed to treat depression and anxiety, to provide family carers of people with traumatic brain injury specific strategies to deal with complex and challenging behaviour.

Through the iCare Foundation grant program Carers NSW was awarded a grant for \$61,953 for a Young carer support program. The program provides support services to children, siblings and family carers of severely injured people, to increase their resilience, knowledge, connections and wellbeing.

Human resources policies and practice

- iCare provides support to permanent employees who are carers by providing Carer’s Leave which can be used in circumstances where someone they care for becomes ill or injured. Carer’s Leave can include caring for children or the elderly.
- We also provide permanent employees with Family and Community Services leave (2.5 days per year in the first and second years of employment and then one day each year thereafter) for any unplanned and emergency family responsibilities or other emergencies such as illness of a family member or cancellation of child care.
- The Department of Family and Community Services recognised iCare’s work at a presentation delivered at the seventh International Carers Conference, with our implementation of the Carer’s Recognition Act held up as an example of good practice.

NSW Department of Justice

Initiatives to support carers

Funds granted to community organisations

- Best Employment Ltd was granted \$15,053 for their Water Safety Fund (WSF) for the Platypus Paddlers Water-Safe Program: increase swim-safe skills for infants and toddlers, and encourage parents and carers to play an active role in and around the water, delivered at community aquatic centres in Inverell and Ashford, NSW.
- The Office of Public Guardian undertook community education sessions for carers of people with disability in 2017-18:

Date	Agency	Audience
22 August 2017	The Junction Works	Carers for persons with age related disabilities and other disabilities
18 September 2017	Living Care Churches of Christ	Carers for persons with age related disabilities
18 February 2018	Sydney Mardi Gras	LGBTIQ community and carers
2 March 2018	Northern Settlement	Carers for refugee community and elderly
5 April 2018	Premier's Seniors Week	Carers for persons with age related and other disabilities
10 April 2018	Liverpool City Council Antegra Over 50s Village	Carers for persons with age related disabilities
25 May 2018	Sydney Disability Expo	Carers for age related, mental illness intellectual and other disabilities
28 May 2018	Bayside Council	Carers for persons with age related, mental illness, physical and other disabilities

Consultation with carers

NSW Trustee and Guardian:

- The legislative framework makes it mandatory to consider the views of those involved in clients' lives when making decisions about their health, lifestyle and financial affairs. This enshrines the role of carers in decision making processes and is reinforced by the NSW Trustee and Guardian's decision making framework.
- NSW Trustee and Guardian maintains information on the intranet for all staff on the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010.

LawAccess NSW:

- Essential principles of the Act are addressed in the course of each induction for all new employees.

Human resources policies and practice

- The Department maintains two intranet pages providing information relating to carers:
- The workforce diversity carers' intranet page, details 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.

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 will be launching a single Flex Agreement in late 2018, for staff who work under Flexible working arrangements. This provides a positive outcome for all staff, including those with carer's responsibilities. The single Flex Agreement will provide consistent working conditions, while still allowing for existing operational differences particular to certain areas of work.
- The Department is in the process of reviewing all Flexible Work Practices Policy and Guidelines and aim to have an updated document available to all staff in late 2018.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Armidale Regional Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Council has a Flexible Working Arrangements Policy in place which provides for flexibility in handling work and family responsibilities. Council also utilises its Consultative committee as a consulting mechanism with employees during the development of HR operational policies and procedures.
- All employees are eligible for Carer's Leave and the Councillors Facilities and Expenses Policy makes provision for carer's and child care expenses.
- An Employee Assistance Program is available for staff to access and its use is encouraged. Staff can access this service for personal reasons in complete privacy.

Bayside Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Council provides new employees, through its induction process, information about available work practices that may assist them with carer responsibilities.
- In addition to the assistance provided through the Local Government (State) Award, 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 carer's responsibilities on an individual basis taking into account operational requirements.
- 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.

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.

Blacktown City Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Council offers employees carers leave to care for family members and relatives and an employee assistance program and onsite counselling support services.

Bland Shire Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Carers leave is provided to employees.

Blayney Shire Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Councillors who are the principal carer of a child or other elderly, disabled and/or sick immediate family member shall be entitled to reimbursement of carer's expenses up to a maximum of \$1,000 per annum for attendance at Council and Committee meetings and other official civic functions.

Blue Mountains City Council

Human resources policies and practice

- We acknowledge that for people to bring their best to work requires a balance of both personal and work commitments. Council provides a range of options to support staff in finding this balance, including Carers leave for staff who care for family members and relatives.

Bogan Shire Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Council adopted a Carer's Leave Policy in March 2013 with a revised version adopted in June 2018.

Bourke Shire Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Council is not a Human Service Agency under the Act; however Council has formulated a policy on our obligations under the NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010.
- All Employees have the same rights, choices and opportunities. Allowance is also made to refund Councillors expenses involved in the provision of care for an immediate family member to allow the Council to undertake their civic duty.

Brewarrina Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

- During the 2017/2018 year the Brewarrina Youth and Community Development sector have delivered an amazing arrangement of programs to the community including the Family/Carer support program.

Burwood Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Council distributed \$3,000 in funding as part of its Community Grants to two local organisations that provide support for carers.

Byron Shire Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Council continued to ensure compliance with EEO based recruitment and selection, targeted training and development, merit based transfers, non-discriminatory employment and employment separation and supporting flexibility for employees who have family and carer responsibilities.
- Council has continued to raise awareness of the Carers (Recognition) Act and NSW Carers Charter by displaying materials throughout its worksites and distribution of information in staff newsletters, memos and emails.
- Council captures data in relation to employees with caring responsibilities on commencement of employment and also in our Staff Surveys.
- Council provides support to carers through its Employee Assistance Program which provides employees with access to up to five free counselling sessions per year.
- Council is committed to implementing contemporary workforce management policies that promote and encourage flexibility and ensuring employees who are carers are provided with appropriate workplace support and flexibility.

Cabonne Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Council understands that a carer's input is integral to ensuring both independence and quality of life to those utilising Council's services. Carers are acknowledged as individuals and the relationship with those they are caring for is both respected and supported. This is taken into consideration with all carer interactions by Community Transport, Home and Community Care, and Children's Services.
- Council's services are provided in a manner which is both sensitive and understanding to the role and needs of the carer.
- All staff providing services have an awareness of the Statement for Australian Carers, and this is taken into consideration when developing, implementing and reviewing services.
- Council granted carers 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 Companions card and accepts the card at its venues. In recognising the important role played by carers, Council hosted a range of activities during Carers Week including a series of Carers Cafes; creating opportunities for carers to meet and engage with services for information and support.
- Carers Count gift packages were also distributed across the Camden LGA providing vouchers to leisure centres, movies and well-being resources and information.

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.
- Council continues to ensure that policies remain supportive for all employees, particularly those with carer's responsibilities.

Canada Bay, City of

Initiatives to support carers

- Complimentary entry for carers of people with a disability at Five Dock Leisure Centre, golf courses and swimming centres.

Carrathool Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

- 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. In 2017/18 Carrathool Shire Council provided 2,137 hours of respite care through Council's Multi Service Outlet.
- Council by way of its HACC and respite services is considered to be a 'human service agency' as defined under the *Carers Recognition Act 2010*.
- Carrathool Shire Council has always considered and complied with the NSW Carers Charter.

Central Coast Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Council will improve inclusive employment practices and increase the rate of meaningful employment of people with disabilities with Central Coast Council.
- Review and update all relevant Central Coast Council People and Culture policies to ensure inclusive employment practices that consider all types of disabilities, e.g., leave policies, including sick and

carers, general work conditions policies and work from home policy.

- Council developed a project to look at harmonising all People and Culture Policies. In relation to this action, there have been four (4) policies launched that each reference Equal Employment Opportunity principles, specifically those relating to people with a disability to support an inclusive workplace.
- Policies are:
 - Equity Diversity and Respect
 - Learning and Development Policy
 - Talent Acquisition Policy (Recruitment)
 - Workplace Leave and Flexibility Policy
- A new Work Health Safety policy is also due for adoption within the next quarter which will address disability inclusion.

Sydney, City of

Initiatives to support carers

- Awarded a Festival and event sponsorship grant to Carers NSW Limited for Carers Day Out 2017 – 2019 for \$15,000.
- The City was a member of Australian Network on Disability, the Diversity Council Australia, Pride in Diversity and Carer's NSW.

Human resources policies and practice

- 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 and inclusive workplace that is supportive of individual life situations. In 2017/18 initiatives to address the City's obligations under the Carers (Recognition) Act included:
 - A review of workplace flexibility which will result in new policy, guidelines, tools, communication and training to be implemented in 2018/19. The review considered the needs of employees with carer responsibilities.
 - Building a 'care aware' workplace at the City through:
 - The launch of employee capabilities that provide common language and understanding of the behaviours, skills and knowledge expected of everyone at the City including ensuring an inclusive, respectful and collaborative workplace;
 - Promotion of the Carers Toolkit to enable managers and employees to understand issues and find solutions;
 - Updating internal policies and procedures during the review cycle to ensure the needs of employees with carer responsibilities are addressed.
- The City also established a network of trained Peer Support employees to provide initial support and information to employees who may be experiencing an issue which is impacting on their mental health and wellbeing. This Peer Support Network includes employees with specific skills and lived experience in disability; LGBTQI; aged care and carers responsibilities; multicultural; migrants; refugees; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; domestic violence; drugs and alcohol and family breakdown.

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 assisted families and carers to transition to the NDIS during this year.

Human resources policies and practice

- Council updated the Flexible Working Arrangements policy in February 2017, 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 and the Sick, Carers, Health and Wellbeing Leave Protocol was updated and adopted in March 2018 to meet all Award requirements.
- 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. Staff are encouraged to contact Care & Support Services for any information about services that may be required in their caring role.

Cumberland Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Council has various policies and guidelines in place to support staffs who are carers. These include:
 - Carers Charter*
 - Carers Guidelines
 - Flexible working arrangements
 - Purchased Leave Guidelines
 - Job Share Guidelines
 - Carers Networks have been launched for staff that are carers
 - Carers Resources (internal) website for staff.
- The Carers Charter has been re-signed by the Mayor Greg Cummings.
- Council has continued to show its support for carers by raising awareness to staff and customers, through the delivery of Customer Service foyers.

Eurobodalla Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) provides services to eligible seniors including respite services for carers, with clients taking advantage of a wide range of services to suit all interests.
- There are currently 150 clients registered across all services receiving grant income \$1.6 million per annum. A new grant agreement received for 2018-20 commencing 1 July will continue current levels of service.
- Council will undertake actions to increase awareness of the NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 in the 2018/19 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

- Supported the Mental Health Carers' project in partnership with the Parramatta Mission Mental Health Carers, which provided free carers support and engagement regardless of NDIS support.
- Delivered the Train the Trainer Peer support program as part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Transition Training. Since the program was established, volunteers have become an NDIS 'buddy' to fellow carers who are starting out with NDIS.
- Celebrated Seniors Week events across the City, which included a Talent Quest and Expo that provided opportunities for seniors, carers, their families and the community to meet with 26 local service providers and learn about new services in the local community.
- Held two carers events involving 80 people that were organised with the cooperation of two carer partner agencies.

- Held three information sessions provided for carers and people with disability about changes impacting on their lives, including language-specific sessions.
- Held Carers Week Event - A carers event in partnership with the local community organisations to celebrate the contribution of carers 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 events.
- Held International Day of People with Disabilities event, which included the recognition of carers' contributions to people with disability.
- 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.

Consultation with Carers

- Engaged carers in the development of the Strategy on Ageing for Fairfield City 2018–2022 and Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

Human resources policies and practice

- The following policies and programs enable staff to request council support in achieving a work/life balance that enables fulfilment of caring responsibilities outside of their employment.
 - Flexible Working Arrangements Policy – Subject to operational requirements
 - Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy
 - Employee Assistance Program
 - Diversity Management – Equal Employment
 - Opportunity Plan 2017-2020 articulating future actions that support the objectives of Carers Recognition Act and NSW Carers Charter.
 - A carer recognition educational module was delivered to Council's workforce through the Learning Management System. The content included information on the NSW Carers Charter and Council support for employees who provide ongoing personal care for individuals with disability, illness, or the frail aged.

Georges River Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Through the Community Grants Program council awarded \$10,000 to the Carer Support Service to undertake the Resilient Carer Program. This delivers skills-based workshops for dealing with the stresses and difficulties of full time caring for a loved one.
- Through the Community Grants Program council awarded the Sutherland Shire Carer Support Service \$5,000 to undertake the Chinese Speaking Carer Resilience Program.
- Council's Community Development team facilitates and supports programs for seniors, people with disability, people with mental illness and 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.

Goulburn Mulwaree Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Goulburn Respite Service provides centre based day care programs at the Goulburn Community Centre, 155 Auburn St, Goulburn, three days per week and the Brewer Centre in Marulan, one day per week. The service is for people who are frail aged, people with disabilities and their carers. Programs are designed to enable them to remain independent and living in their own homes in the Goulburn Mulwaree Local Government area. This program is funded by the Australian Government, My Aged Care – Commonwealth Home Support Programme.

Greater Hume Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Promotion of the NSW Carers Charter and Carers Rights to GHSC staff.
- Staff training completed that equips staff to respond to the needs of carers.
- Needs of people with disability and Carers are considered as part of Policy Review Framework. Policy template to be updated during 2018/2019 year.

Gunnedah Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

- GoCo accepted an offer of novation from Tamworth Regional Council during 2017/18, which saw the transition of all Tamworth Council Aged Care and Carer Support Services transition to Gunnedah Shire Council. This also included: three new office spaces in Kootingal, Barraba and Nundle; three new service types: meals on wheels, the Carer Support Program and Commonwealth Home Support Sector Support and Development funds; 5 new staff; 50 new volunteers; and just over 200 new clients.
- 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.

Consultation with carers

- On 21 June 2017, Council endorsed the 2017-2021 Disability Inclusion Action Plan, articulating a clear set of priority actions aimed at enhancing access and participation for all over the next four years. The Plan has been developed in consultation with over 340 internal and external stakeholders, and provides Council with an opportunity to assist residents and visitors of all abilities to actively engage with, and contribute to, the diverse fabric of the Shire.
- While community satisfaction with Council's services in relation to access and inclusion overall was strong, employment and infrastructure rates as the two key priority areas for enhancements. The consultation process highlighted the barriers that still remain for people with disability and their carers

when accessing information and services, and when getting around our community, and based on the feedback and ideas received, the Plan sets out strategies to address those barriers. Council's Access Working Group will support the implementation of the Plan, and Council looks forward to continuing our conversations with the community, and in particular, people with disability and their carers, in order to maximize the potential that this Plan provides.

Gwydir Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

- The relationship between carers and the persons for whom they care is recognised and respected within the Gwydir Shire. Carers are considered to be partners with all other care providers in the provision of care and are treated with dignity and respect.
- Gwydir Shire acknowledges the important role carers play within the community and aims to provide timely and appropriate support. Aged Care within the Gwydir Shire involve carers in the ongoing health management by way of inclusion in Case Conferences and being consulted about new program proposals that are directed to carers or the person they care for.
- Staff awareness and education is available through various programs such as Dementia Australia and Golden Carers. Staff also have access to webinars providing information and education on programs such as the new Integrated Carer Support Service Model.
- Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) services also celebrate carers week and this year have organised a luncheon for carers at the Reedy Creek café in Warialda to recognise their importance, provide support and connect with other carers.

Consultation with carers

- Gwydir Shire seeks input and feedback from consumers and their carer's and has access to various methods for raising and resolving complaints. This feedback is actively reviewed and the service is improved as appropriate.

Hawkesbury City Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council funds Peppercorn Life Skills that provide Home and Garden maintenance including subsidised lawn mowing and garden maintenance to frail aged people, people with disabilities and their carers in the Hawkesbury, Penrith and Blue Mountains Local Government Areas.

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 2017/18, 2,495 home library visits were made.
- Carers Week Art Exhibition, October 2017 – 14 Carers displayed 40 pieces of art and participated in afternoon tea to celebrate the important role of carers in our community.
- Council researched and applied for Autism Swim program grant in an effort to improve outcomes for carers of children with autism.

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. AccessEAP 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

Human resources policies and practice

- Council provides assistance to staff who are carers in a variety of ways. We provide flexible access to a variety of leave entitlements and rostered days, including at short notice, in particular, to accommodate requests for carers leave. In cases where staff have exhausted their leave entitlements, we refer to relevant provisions of the Local Government Award and applicable enterprise agreements, and may grant additional paid time off work on a case by case basis.
- Council endeavours to accommodate requests for flexible working arrangements to assist with carers responsibilities and where appropriate offers free and confidential access to our Employee Assistance Service provider which includes counselling services.
- HR policies and practices are in the process of being harmonised and the above reflects what is available at this point in time. It is anticipated that future arrangements will include all of the above.

Kiama Municipal Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Blue Haven Care saw a return of funding in 2017/18 for the Illawarra Carer Respite Program.

Kempsey Shire Council

Human resources policies and practice

- In conjunction with the Workforce Management Strategy, Council has reviewed its recruitment strategy in utilising capability framework, core competency and situational behavioural interview techniques for better recruitment tool to appoint candidates.
- To meet these principles we have adopted procedures and practices that will assist us in becoming an attractive employer with:
 - variable work arrangements
 - flexible working arrangements for parents/carers

Lachlan Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

- As part of Council's delivery plan for the Disability Inclusion Action Plan council applied for funding to offer respite care for carers in Condobolin and Lake Cargelligo.

Lane Cove Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Ongoing facilitation of flexible work arrangements for employees who have Carer's responsibilities to ensure their service continuation, superannuation and career prospects are not adversely impacted due to these responsibilities.

Leeton Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

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

Liverpool Plains Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council provides support to Carers through its Commonwealth Home Support Program, Community Transport and Childcare services.

Consultation with carers

- Council consults with bodies representing carers when developing policies and programs that can impact carers. Council also ensures that staff have an awareness and understanding of the NSW Carers Charter.

Human resources policies and practice

- Council includes carer awareness as part of its induction package for all new employees. Employees are encouraged to speak with their direct supervisor in the first instance regarding any personal circumstances and any requirement for flexible work arrangements.

Mid Coast Council

Initiatives to support carers

- The Manning Entertainment Centre now accepts companion cards for all shows, allowing carers to accompany people with a disability without the need to pay for their seat.
- As part of the development of the Rural Strategy the planning section is looking at rural tourism opportunities - including inclusive (or accessible) tourism and opportunities for carer respite facilities and other alternative options within rural and environmental areas.

Mid-Western Regional Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Council continued to offer assistance with flexible working arrangements for employees with family and carer's responsibilities whilst ensuring we continue to meet our operational, customer and employee requirements.

Mosman Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council runs a carers group.

Nambucca Shire Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Provided flexible work practices including part-time work, flexible hours and nine-day fortnight, which enhance our ability to support employees with carer and family responsibilities.

Narrabri Shire Council

Human resources policies and practice

- 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.

Narrandera

Initiatives to support carers

- A small program for respite care is provided, primarily for the benefit of carers of frail aged people or people with a disability. It allows the carer to have some time out to attend to personal matters.

Human resources policies and practice

- Narrandera Shire council have many policies in place in support of carers therefore minimal changes have been required.
- Below are a number of policies which show support and respect to Carers and the people they care for:
 - Carers Leave Policy - An employee may access accrued sick leave to provide care and support to an eligible class of person as defined in the Local Government State Award.
 - Equal Employment Opportunity Policy – Allows fairness to giving equal opportunity to all applicants regardless of their personal situation. Council will conduct a comprehensive audit of all human resource management (HR) policies, procedures and practices - written or unwritten - over a period of 2 years from the time the EEO management plan commences. Policies, procedures and practices found to be incompatible or inconsistent with the provisions and spirit of EEO and related legislation will be discarded or replaced. Informal procedures and practices will be identified, reviewed and formalised where they are deemed to be appropriate.
 - Job Sharing Policy - Job sharing or flexible working arrangements is an employment arrangement where typically two people are retained on a part-time or reduced-time basis to perform a job normally fulfilled by one person working full-time, giving carers the opportunity to work part-time to allow them to attend to the needs of their dependents or the people they care for whilst being able to work.
 - Leave Without Pay Policy -Leave without pay may be granted at the discretion of the General Manager when annual leave and long service leave has been exhausted. - Supports Carers who need additional leave.
 - Parental Leave Policy - To provide employees with assistance to remain in the workforce after the birth of children and to ensure Council abides by all the statutory requirements relating to the granting of maternity leave. – Provides support to Carers of infants and young children.
 - Part Time Employment Policy - Council will consider requests for transfer from full-time to part-time employment, providing there is no change in the nature of the position. Council shall also have regard to balancing efficiency and work organisation concerns against the merits of the employee's request for transfer from full-time to part-time employment and vice versa. Where an employee requests such a transfer council should have regard to antidiscrimination legislation and its own operational requirements. The consultative committee shall be informed of such transfer. This provides the opportunity for Carers to request a more flexible work arrangement.
 - Purchased Leave Policy - Narrandera Shire Council is committed to consideration of a range of

Flexible Work Arrangements aimed at improving work/life balance for staff. Purchased Leave is one such option and this procedure establishes the basis for consideration of Purchased Leave requests and the parameters applicable to any subsequent arrangement.

- Recruitment Of Staff Policy - The selection function is the process of choosing the best person for the vacant position. This process includes the short listing of applicants for interview, developing questions for the interview, interviewing of applicants and selecting who should be offered the position based on merit - therefore allowing equal opportunity to carers.
 - Sick Leave and Carer's Leave Policy – Allows Staff to care for their dependants in accordance with the Local Government State Award.
 - Working From Home Policy - Narrandera Shire Council acknowledges that working from home arrangements may be appropriate for certain positions and in certain circumstances - this allows for Carers to work from home when appropriate and approved.
- Employee Assistance Program – Council's employee Assistance Program (EAP) Policy – Council's Employee Assistance Program provides confidential and professional assistance for employees and their family who are experiencing difficulties of a personal or work-related nature - this gives Carers and their families' access to a service they would otherwise not have.
 - All new employees undertake a comprehensive induction where information is given in terms of responsibilities, policies and procedures, entitlements and processes are explained. As a part of this process carers are educated on the services available to them.
 - All policy updates are circulated to staff. This allows for all staff to stay up to date with implemented changes.
 - The Consultative Committee provides a participative forum for consultation between Council and its employees. The Committee meets regularly and positively cooperates in workplace reform to enhance the efficiency and productivity of the Council and provides employees with access to career opportunities and more fulfilling, varied and better paid work. The committee is responsible for changes to policies and procedures which affect the employees including carers. Once changes are approved by the committee it is then put to the staff in the form of a review document for feedback, this feedback is then considered by the committee, appropriate changes made and put out for review. Once approved staff are made aware of these changes via a memo and training if necessary.

Narromine Shire Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Council also recognises the importance of flexible work arrangements. All employees have the same rights, choices and opportunities. Allowance is also made to refund Councillors expenses involved in the provision of care for an immediate family member to allow the Councillor to undertake their civic duty.

Newcastle City Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Identified within our Workforce Management Plan that we need to become a more inclusive employer and roll out more flexible workplace arrangements to better assist with carer needs and for people with disabilities needing a more flexible work place.

North Sydney Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Carers and people being cared for are supported through service provision offered through our community centres.
- The Crows Nest Centre provides in-home support to people requiring additional assistance to enable them to remain living at home.
- Information and advice is provided to carers and people requiring assistance by Council's Access and Inclusion Coordinator.

Northern Beaches Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council held Carers Week activities.
- Several publications were produced, including a 'Northern Beaches Seniors Directory' for 2018-2020. Council's Disability Newsletter was distributed to over 1,400 recipients, covering information and programs for people, carers and their families.
- Council ran several successful Expos including two expos on the NDIS and a Wellbeing Expo for Seniors Festival in March 2018 with activities and stalls for carers of frail and dementing seniors.

Human resources policies and practice

- Council has recently embarked on a program of harmonisation of its human resources policies.
- Council has developed a Culture, Values and Behaviours Program, as well as a Diversity and Inclusion Policy to ensure that our employees are valued and respected for their diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.
- Council introduced a Working from Home policy to enable council employees flexibility to balance their work and personal responsibilities. There are also a number of flexible working options available to employees, including employees with carer responsibilities. These include part-time work, job sharing, working from home and flexible working hours.

Orange City Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council runs a program called 'Choices at Home' which provides services to help carers including Meals on Wheels and a Shopping Service to assist with grocery shopping, bill paying and visiting the bank or chemist.

Parramatta, City of

Initiatives to support carers

- Council's Community Care Carer Support Program provides informal counselling, information, support and advocacy to 38 carers. This support to carers is through one on one informal counselling, carer support groups, information through literature and education sessions.
- Whilst there are carers that are formally recognised through this service there are also carers across other Community Care services that are providing care. The support provided to them is by social support, provision of meals or practical assistance through the Community Assist Lawn Mowing service.
- Carers are providing care to adults or children with disability, mental illness and people with cognitive impairments.
- Carers Week is celebrated in October generally with a day out for carers of the Carer Support Service.

Consultation with carers

- In 2017 City of Parramatta developed its inaugural Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP). The DIAP outlines the practical steps we will take over the next four years to create a more inclusive community for people with disability who are living in the Parramatta local government area (LGA).
- Throughout the development of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan for Council many carers from across the local government area were consulted with many key contributions being put forward for consideration in the plan.

Human resources policies and practice

- Council provides a range of flexible work arrangements 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 operations requirements.

Randwick City Council

Initiatives to support carers

- The Council supports carers in a range of ways, directly and indirectly. Examples of indirect support to carers by Randwick City Council include:
 - 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;
 - organised information forums and healthy living workshops in partnership with peak bodies and agencies such as Carers NSW, POWH, and Alzheimer's Australia; and
 - developed and implemented our Disability Inclusion Action Plan (2017-2021) which aims to remove barriers and enable people with disabilities and their carers to participate equally in community. The

plan is a four year framework outlining key strategies and actions to be delivered by Council in its commitment to disability access and inclusion.

- In 2017-18, the following health and wellbeing information sessions, designed for residents who provide care to family members or friends, were held:
 - Piano Forte Legal Community Information Sessions held in partnership with the Seniors Rights Service, Legal Aid NSW, Elder Abuse Helpline, Kingsford Legal Centre and Aged Care Psychiatry Service. The sessions explored legal issues impacting older people and carers such as elder abuse and were open to Council staff.
 - National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) information sessions held in partnership with My Choice Matters, the sessions provided an overview of the NDIS and explored how participants can make the most out of their NDIS Plan. The information session were designed for carers and supporters of people with a disability and were open to Council staff.
 - Art 4 Connection Workshops explored the therapeutic benefits of Art Therapy in a friendly group setting, the workshops were especially designed for carers and were attended by Council staff.
 - Safe TALK – Suicide Prevent Awareness Training Seminars held in partnership with Lifeline involved suicide prevention training for carers who care for someone with a mental illness. The sessions were open to Council staff.
 - Healthy Relationships as We Age Forum held in partnership with the Seniors Rights Service, The Deli Women and Children’s Centre, Carer Support Service and Elder Abuse Helpline. The Forum explored domestic violence, legal issues, abuse of older persons, managing stress and self-care. The session was designed for older people and carers and was attended by Council staff.
 - Back to Prince Henry Day held at the Prince Henry Nursing and Medical Museum, Little Bay was Council’s signature Seniors Week event and was designed for older people and carers and was open to Council staff.
 - Grandparents Fun Day held at the Prince Henry Nursing and Medical Museum, Little Bay involved a range intergenerational activities and was designed for grandparents and Carers living in the Southern suburbs of Randwick City, and was open to Council staff.
 - Heritage Twilight tours and talks held at the Prince Henry Nursing and Medical Museum Little Bay. The Twilight Tour explored the history of the former Prince Henry Hospital. Topics were tailored to meet the needs and interests of carers.
 - Cultural Bridges Multicultural Concert held in partnership with Ethnic Community Services Cooperative showcased multicultural performances from around the world for seniors and carers from non- English speaking backgrounds living in Randwick City and surrounding areas.
 - Green Gym Community Information Session held in partnership with Conservation Volunteers Australia involved promoting the Green Gym Health and Wellbeing exercise program to older adults and carers aged 50-80 years old in eastern Sydney. Green Gym Program implemented in partnership with Conservation Volunteers Australia at the Randwick Community Centre involved practical conservation activities to reduce social isolation and improve the health and wellbeing outcomes of people aged 50-80 years.
 - Your Brain Matters Presentations held in partnership with Dementia Australia 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.
 - New Ways to Prevent and Treat Back Pain seminars held in partnership with Neuroscience Research Australia involved the latest finding and treatments to reduce back pain by targeting the brain, especially for those in chronic pain. The seminars were designed for older people and carers and were attended by Council staff.
 - ‘Wrap with Love’ program at St Basil’s Aged Care Facility at Randwick for older people and carers. The program promotes social inclusion and participation and involves volunteers who knit wraps which are donated to overseas charities.

- Volunteer Expo held at Randwick Town Hall involved the provision of information and guidance in relation to local volunteering opportunities in Randwick City and surrounding areas. Carers and older people attended and participated in the Expo.
- Harmony Day event held in partnership with The Junction Neighbourhood Centre involved celebrating cultural diversity in Randwick City and promoting local community services and programs to residents. The Harmony Day event particularly targeted older parent carers from non-English speaking backgrounds.
- 'Silent Tears' exhibition and launch at Lionel Bowen Library, Maroubra. The multimedia exhibition revealed the lived-experience of women who had acquired a brain injury as a result of domestic violence. The exhibition and launch involved carers and women with disabilities.
- Disability Ball for people with a disability and their carers held in partnership with Holdsworth Community at the Prince Henry Centre, Little Bay. The Ball celebrated International Day of People with a Disability.
- Kamay Cultural Experience Guided Tour and Talk of the Kamay Botany National Park special event held during Seniors Week. This local community 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.
- Christmas Celebration events and information sessions held in partnership with Ethnic Community Services Co-operative at Kensington Park Community Centre for seniors and carers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. These events targeted isolated Carers who do not typically access formal services.
- Seniors Wellbeing Project held in partnership with Holdsworth Community involves wellbeing exercise classes and activities for frail aged Seniors and Carers living Randwick City and surrounding areas. 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.

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 needs and circumstances are considered individually to ensure that special needs are taken into account. As a result, managers have the discretion to provide extra support and flexibility when needed.
- In 2017-18, 6,250 hours of paid Carers Leave was accessed by employees at Randwick City Council.
- Throughout the year Council provided staff with support and information to assist in their caring responsibilities. Our monthly Life-Style Lunches for staff and our annual "All Stops to Randwick" event continue our focus on employee benefits and total wellbeing. Sessions this year included:

- Healthy eating and immune boosters
- Healthy sleep patterns
- Mindfulness
- RUOK? Depression and suicide awareness
- Open the Door – awareness of mental illness and mental health
- Assistance for aged carers
- Employee benefits program rebranded and presented to all staff
- The announcement of the new, industry leading Family and Domestic Violence Policy, providing 10 days paid special leave along with flexible work practices and other support for employees who are victims of Family and Domestic Violence.

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council

Initiatives to support carers

- As part of Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan Council is working with its community partners to advocate for appropriate service levels to the region Advocate to State and Federal Government for increased services for people with disability and their carers.
- Between 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 Council representatives attended the National Disability Inclusion Scheme State Government Forum, NSW Dept. FACS and the Mid North Coast Planning Forum.

Human resources policies and practice

- Council's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Management Plan seeks to create a positive work culture within the organisation, by ensuring all employees adopt fair practices and demonstrate ethical behaviour while respecting the social, personal and cultural attributes of those they interact with, including:
 - Ongoing provision of flexible work practices for employees with carer and family responsibilities, including part time work, purchased leave, flexible hours and work from home.
- To become an employer of choice Council has reviewed our obligations under the Carers Recognition Act and is implementing appropriate practices including a review of the Carers Leave Procedure in June 2018.
- A new Flexible Working Arrangements Policy has been drafted that takes into consideration five other comparative Council's policies – the Policy will undergo formal consultation during the latter part of 2018 with an expected adoption and implementation to be finalised early 2019.

Singleton Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Singleton Council is continually developing policies and programs to support greater workplace flexibility. During 2017/2018 over six per cent of our workforce utilised various flexible working arrangements, including conversions from full-time to part-time employment, condensed full time hours and change in regular work patterns, parental leave, carer's leave, purchased additional leave and a phased transition to retirement.

Snowy Monaro Regional Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Community Support Services provides support to numerous carers throughout the region by offering flexible respite in the consumers' home or at our centres in Cooma and Bombala. This year we supported 110 carers under the Commonwealth Home Support Program Care Relationships and Carer Support Sub-Program.
- Under the Carers Recognition Act, 2010 we ensured we provided quality in home respite which allowed working carers or those who needed a break, reliable and consistent service which supported them in their caring role.

Human resources policies and practice

- Council's Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan refers to a workplace that promotes equity referring specifically to Carers. Council's obligations under the Local Government (State) Award, with regard to carers' leave and flexible arrangements for staff, who are carers, is in accordance with the guidelines of the Carer Recognition Act, 2010.

Snowy Valleys Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Tumut Community Transport Service This service provides transport for people in our Communities, who are frail aged, people who have a disability, and for their carers.

Consultation with carers

- Consultations for the Snowy Valleys Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan were undertaken across the Snowy Valleys Council area with people and carers of people with disability.

Strathfield Council

Initiatives to support carers

- The Home Library service continued to deliver library materials to housebound residents. Inclusion in programs for people with disability and their carers was encouraged through participation in the International Day for People with Disability and Carers Week.

Sutherland Shire Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Sutherland Shire Council is committed to being a family-friendly employer and providing employees with opportunities for work/life balance. This is done by providing flexibility in employment practices and work arrangements so that employees can balance the demands of work and their personal life.
- A flexible workplace makes good business sense as it maximises the opportunity to retain skilled staff which reduces turnover and the associated costs relating to recruitment and training. It also reduces absenteeism and produces a happier workforce that is less stressed, has a balance in life and therefore results in a more productive and efficient workforce.

- Sutherland Shire Council is committed to flexible work options through providing: 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 and the ability to work from home.

Tamworth Regional Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council, through its New England Carer Support Service provides information, support and advocacy for people who care for family members with a disability, chronic illness or are frail aged. The Carer Support Service held a range of social meetings as well as information forums for carers throughout the year. This includes a group for all carers, working carers and for Aboriginal carers. A Regional Carers Conference is held biannually. The number of carers using the service has increased with the need for advocacy, information and assistance to gain the services the assistants most needed.

Consultation with carers

- Council has a Flexible Working Arrangements policy in place which provides the opportunity for flexibility in handling work and family responsibilities. 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

- Council employees are aware of the change in regulations and the Charter is displayed on notice boards. Employees are encouraged to speak with their direct supervisor in the first instance regarding their personal circumstances and the requirement for flexible working arrangements.
- 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 auspices a Carers Support Group and newsletter and employees are encouraged to register with this service.

Temora Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council hosted an afternoon tea for carers.

Hills Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Council's Hills Community Care provides respite care to the frail-aged or people with disabilities, allowing full-time carers to take a break.

Upper Lachlan Council

Initiatives to support carers

- The Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) assesses need and services required for older people and provide referrals to other services. Assistance with household duties, personal care and respite is available through Baptist Community Services, Home Care, Anglicare, with in home nursing services accessible through the Department of Veterans Affairs and SIHD. The Crookwell Neighbourhood Centre Inc. operates an In-Home Emergency Respite for Carers Program that may include people with a disability.
- Crookwell Neighbourhood Centre Inc. operates an In-Home Emergency Respite for Carers Program which has been running for a considerable period.
- Community transport is available for people identified through the HACC program or the Community Transport program (CTP). HACC targets all frail aged people, people with a permanent and functional disability and the carers of these groups. CTP targets groups who are rurally and socially isolated and spare seating is available to people outside the target groups at commercial rates.

Uralla Shire Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Uralla Shire Council recognises the contribution carers make to the Uralla Shire community. Council's human resources policies fully take the Carers Recognition Act 2010 into consideration when these policies are drafted, implemented and reviewed.
- Council employees are entitled to use any current or accrued sick leave entitlement to provide care and support to a person whose wellbeing is their responsibility. In cases which require long-term provision of care, the employee is encouraged to discuss arrangements with their supervisor or manager.

Consultation with carers

- Uralla Shire Council undertook internal consultation with staff and external consultation with local people with disability, their carers, and the services that support them. Areas of good practice and priority areas for improvement were identified.
- Council adopted its Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) in June 2017 in its annual Delivery Program and Operational Plan to improve access and inclusion for people with a disability in the Uralla Shire community.

Warrumbungle

Initiatives to support carers

- Warrumbungle Community Care (WCC) provides a range of services across the Shire to assist the frail aged, people with a disability and carers. Services include Community Transport, Meals on Wheels, Respite, Social Support and Home Maintenance. WCC is now an Authorised Home Care Package supplier, and Registered NDIS provider.
- These services support people to continue to live independently in their own homes. WCC provides services to almost 800 clients across the Shire. These services are provided by our dedicated team of six (6) staff and a team around 185 volunteers.

- In 2017/18 financial year Warrumbungle Community Care provided the following services:
 - 14,162 meals
 - 9,263.15 hours of social support
 - 2,033.70hours of home maintenance
 - 824.25 hours of respite
 - 18,441 community transport trips
 - 10,562 Taxi Vouchers

Human resources policies and practice

- Council provides Carer's Leave to its employee, in the 2017/18 financial year the total amount spent on carers leave totalled \$144,931.78.

Wentworth Council

Initiatives to support carers

- To ensure that people with a disability and their carers are included in service delivery and to provide a method of support for carers living in our community through referral to existing services and to examine the need for future services.

Wollondilly Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Community grant to Disability Macarthur for a carers picnic for \$500.

Wollongong City Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Wollongong Social Support Services provided a variety of outcomes to the community to improve social connection for the target group including three weekend cottage respite care getaways. This program provided 72 hours of respite to four carers of people with dementia.

Yass Council

Human resources policies and practice

- Council continued to provide information to staff to ensure awareness of the Act and the Charter.

Woollahra Council

Initiatives to support carers

- Community Grant - \$3000 - Sailability Rushcutters Bay - The 'Sailing Access' project engages people with a disability and their carers in sailing activities in Sydney Harbour. The project is accessed by people from across Sydney.

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

