

ACT CARERS STRATEGY 2018–2028

Carers make a huge and largely unrecognised contribution to the ACT community and that deserves to be recognised. A better understanding of the role of carers, through increased community awareness, must lead to more support for carers across the ACT society and thus aid their wellbeing and health.

The Carers Voice Panel, which helped develop this statement, reflected the diversity of Canberra's carers. Carers of all ages, culturally and linguistically diverse carers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers, and carers with disability participated and were heard.

VISION

A community that cares for carers and the people they care for.

Supporting carers is investing in Canberra's future.

OUTCOMES

Improving community awareness of the value and contribution of carers

We need to work to educate, build knowledge and understanding of the role and work of carers in the community.

Carers need to be recognised in their own right as carers and not just as 'a significant other'. They need to be recognised by the community at large and identified professionals as being an essential part of the care team because of their comprehensive knowledge of the needs of the person they care for. This will involve improving the knowledge and understanding of the community, medical practitioners, allied health professionals, child protection, educators, police and detention officers, and will result in a positive change in mindset.

A community that is proud of its carers, and proud to be a caring community, is able to support carers better. In addition, caring families also need to be recognised as normal families, despite having special needs.

Recognising carers' skills and knowledge

We need to recognise the skills, knowledge and experience carers have, how they translate in practice to individuals in their care and enable these to be recognised in the workforce. These skills, knowledge and experience may be able to be mapped to nationally-accredited courses or recognised as prior learning to facilitate workforce engagement or recognition. In addition, improved supports need to be implemented to ensure young carers are supported to complete their formal education and achieve their aspirations.

Accepting people who are cared for as normal people in the community, regardless of any disability

We must develop strategies to increase community understanding of how to relate to people with disabilities, so that we become a more inclusive society.

Embedding within the ACT community a culture that every ACT citizen has some role as, and an ability, to contribute to caring

In a caring society, everybody should feel they have an ability, or role, to contribute to the care of those in need.

Enabling carers to take better care of themselves through the provision of more support services, including physical and mental health

Carers should be proud to identify themselves as a carer, and should have access to support services needed to ensure their own health does not suffer as a result of their caring responsibilities.

Wider supports

Carers must have access to support services as needed to ensure their own health does not deteriorate due to their caring responsibilities. These supports need to be tailored for each carer and adaptable as a caring role changes.

Increased awareness and skills within government agencies

We must increase the skills within ACT Government agencies, at organisational and individual levels, to work with and respect the needs of carers.

CarersACT



ACT
Government





PRIORITIES

Recognition

Recognition means respect for the skills, knowledge and contribution of carers throughout the community, government, service providers and workplaces.

This also means recognition within the legal system and by medical and other professionals, so carers are respected for their knowledge and expertise and are recognised as having valid knowledge about the people they care for. Working side-by-side with the medical and other professionals is what carers want.

Education

Education means both increasing opportunities and support for young carers to complete their formal education and achieve their aspirations. It also means recognising the valuable skills, knowledge and experience that people gain by being carers through a form of accreditation and formal recognition.

The skills, knowledge and experience of carers should also be validated in the workplace.

Information access

Improved access to relevant and current information means better access to information that meets the needs of carers.

Ongoing carer engagement

Carers need to be involved in determining their own journey. Carers know the services they need to best support them in their caring role and these do not always align with what is perceived or offered as support. Carers need to be involved in policy formulation and review by Government and NGOs, to ensure that services continue to align with their needs.

Enhanced support services

There are a range of support services that are needed or need to be enhanced, reviewed or improved to support carers. Improving support for carers is a responsibility of all levels of government and the broader community, and must take account of the diversity of carers and caring roles.

All carers' needs are treated equitably

Different types of carers have different needs but all of these needs must be acknowledged. Carers must be treated equitably.