



Tasmanian Carer Action Plan 2013 – 2018

Introduction

The Tasmanian Carer Action Plan 2013–2018 (the Action Plan) has been developed to operationalise the objectives of the Tasmanian Carer Policy 2013.

The Action Plan outlines the Tasmanian Government's commitment to improving the quality of life for carers¹ over the next five years. Responsibility for implementing the Action Plan lies with a number of Tasmanian Government agencies.

Current and recommended initiatives have been noted in the Action Plan, however, it is envisaged that the Action Plan will evolve over its five-year duration to ensure that developing priorities and new opportunities can be taken into consideration.

For example, the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), now referred to as DisabilityCare Australia, will provide people with disability more choice and control over the care and support they receive. In addition, the Australian Government has introduced the National Carer Strategy, which aims to deliver better support to carers.

While carers will benefit from many of the design elements in DisabilityCare Australia and the implementation of the National Carer Strategy, Tasmanian Government agencies also have a continuing role to play in supporting carers by creating a safe and supportive environment for them and those in their care.

In order to support the Action Plan, and to ensure actions are progressed in a timely and ongoing manner, implementation plans will be developed annually and will include appropriate indicators to measure progress against the Action Plan.

The Action Plan will be evaluated as soon as practicable, after five years of operation, by an independent entity.

¹ As defined in Section 3 of the Carer Policy.

Priorities and Actions

The Action Plan is structured around the Objectives and Principles of the Tasmanian Carer Policy 2013. The Priorities for Government actions are as follows:

Priority 1 – Recognition and Respect for Carers

- Action 1.1 - Promote awareness of carers, their role and needs.
- Action 1.2 – Promote the Tasmanian Carer Policy and Action Plan.

Priority 2 – Information and Support for Carers

- Action 2.1 – Provide current information to carers.
- Action 2.2 – Provide access to training, advice and support to carers.
- Action 2.3 – Promote the health and wellbeing of carers.
- Action 2.4 – Build natural disaster preparedness and response for carers.
- Action 2.5 – Include carers in local communities.

Priority 3 – Carer Participation in Decision-Making Processes

- Action 3.1 – Promote the benefits of carer participation.
- Action 3.2 – Involve carers in planning and service delivery.
- Action 3.3 – Establish a complaints mechanism.

Priority 4 – Develop Organisational Skills and Knowledge

- Action 4.1 – Build the capacity of Tasmanian Government agencies.
- Action 4.2 – Improve Tasmanian Government agencies resources and knowledge of carers.

Acronyms

DEDTA	Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DoE	Department of Education
DoJ	Department of Justice
DPAC	Department of Premier and Cabinet
DPEM	Department of Police and Emergency Management

PRIORITY 1: RECOGNITION AND RESPECT FOR CARERS

Policy Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the level of recognition of carers.
Policy Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers are to be acknowledged and treated as individuals with their own needs within and beyond their caring role. • Carers are to be acknowledged as a diverse group of people, coming from all walks of life and life stages. • The carer and the person receiving care are to be regarded as a partnership, in which each person has rights and responsibilities.
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While rewarding, caring for others is a demanding and difficult role that has many challenges but receives limited support. • Carers deserve recognition for the work they do and the contribution they make to society. However, carers may not be easily identifiable and therefore may not be known to carer agencies and services, or receive support in their caring role. • Children and young people who are carers can be at particular risk of not being recognised and treated as part of a caring relationship. Families with young carers may not seek help from services because they are worried about how services will respond; for example, their circumstances may be labelled or judged by others. Appropriate approaches are required to support families with young carers in order to protect their welfare and maintain family relationships in positive ways that encourage young carers to access support. • Raising awareness and changing attitudes to be more supportive and inclusive of carers and understanding the varying needs of carers is an important step to increasing the recognition of, and respect for, carers.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better recognition of carers and their significant contribution to society. • Heightened awareness and understanding of the needs of carers.

ACTION 1.1: PROMOTE AWARENESS OF CARERS, THEIR ROLE AND NEEDS

1.1.1	All Agencies	Provide carer awareness information as part of agencies induction programs for new employees. Utilise the Care Aware website and videos as resources for induction.
-------	--------------	---

1.1.2	All Agencies	Support and promote National Carers Week (October) to improve the recognition of carers.
1.1.3	DoE	All schools and senior secondary schools support and promote Carers Week (October) to improve recognition of carers, including young student carers, through posters, guest speakers and newsletter articles. Utilise the Care Aware website and videos as a resource for raising awareness of the responsibilities of young carers.
1.1.4	DHHS / DoE / DPAC	Use appropriate award and celebration opportunities to include recognition of carers.
1.1.5	DHHS / DoE	Promote the Children of Parents with Mental Illness (COPMI) eLearning package <i>Keeping Families and Children in Mind</i> to government and non-government service providers as a resource to inform support for young carers.
1.1.6	DPAC	Promote and raise awareness of the Companion Card Program to Tasmanian Businesses.
ACTION 1.2: PROMOTE THE TASMANIAN CARER POLICY AND ACTION PLAN		
1.2.1	DPAC	Develop a communications strategy to promote the Tasmanian Carer Policy and Five-Year Action Plan to all Tasmanian Government agencies; local government; Government Business Enterprises and State Owned Companies; and, Tasmanian Government funded service providers.
1.2.2	DPAC	Provide funding of \$50 000 per annum to Carers Tasmania to establish a Carers Advisory Council and to build their capacity to effectively respond to the needs of Tasmanian carers.

PRIORITY 2: INFORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR CARERS

Policy Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the level of support and services to carers.
Policy Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers are to be provided with relevant information and referred to appropriate services to assist them in their caring role. • To the extent possible, carers are to be supported to enjoy optimum health, social and economic wellbeing, and access to educational and employment opportunities.
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers do not necessarily have information about services and support that could assist them in their roles as carers. • Caring can be challenging and often does not allow much time for finding appropriate information and advice to assist carers. In addition, carers often have less time and energy to participate in the community and this can result in social isolation. • To care safely and maintain their own physical and mental health and wellbeing, carers need information, support, respect and recognition from the professionals with whom they are in contact. • Carers need support to be able to juggle their work and caring roles or to return to work if they have lost employment due to caring. Post-caring, carers may need support to rebuild a life of their own and reconnect with education, work or a social life.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers have access to appropriate and timely information that makes it easier for them to get support. • The health and wellbeing of carers and their capacity to participate in social and community life is improved. • Carers have better access to education and training to improve their caring skills and to develop personally.

ACTION 2.1: PROVIDE CURRENT INFORMATION TO CARERS

2.1.1	All Agencies	Ensure that information for carers is accurate, up-to-date, accessible and provided in a number of formats, particularly as Tasmania transitions to DisabilityCare Australia.
2.1.2	DoE	Develop a web page on young carers needs and support services as a resource for schools and senior secondary schools to support young student carers and their families about care options, including services and community supports.
2.1.3	DoJ	Assist carers with information about matters such as enduring powers of attorney and the making of wills.
2.1.4	DoE	Invite carer support organisations to address Managers Schools Support and Professional Support staff in regional forums on the needs of young student carers.
2.1.5	DoE	Schools and senior secondary schools, at their discretion, encourage student carers to make contact with carer support organisations.
2.1.6	DoE	Schools and senior secondary schools to promote support information and programs such as the Carers Australia <i>Young Carers</i> website and Young Carers Program; the COPMI eLearning package <i>Keeping Families and Children in Mind</i> ; and Tasmanian Government funded support and educational groups for young carers such as Champs Camps and Taz Kids Clubs, delivered through Anglicare, to young carers as needed.

ACTION 2.2: PROVIDE ACCESS TO TRAINING, ADVICE AND SUPPORT TO CARERS

2.2.1	DHHS / DoE	Where appropriate, provide information to carers on opportunities to further develop their skill in providing care that is safe, positive and valuing. eg First Aid, grief and loss; suicide prevention; mental illness and caring; safe lifting; personal care; life planning; and coping skills.
2.2.2	DoE	Provide carers and former carers of working age with effective training and support to re-enter the

		workforce or upgrade their skills.
2.2.3	DoE	Continue to provide flexible education options to young student carers to support them with their education while they undertake their caring responsibilities.
2.2.4	DoE	School support workers, social workers and school psychologists to continue to provide advice and support to student carers.
2.2.5	DoE	Develop strategies to assist young student carers enter post-school training and further education
ACTION 2.3: PROMOTE THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF CARERS		
2.3.1	All Agencies	Promote awareness of support organisations for carers to all staff.
2.3.2	DoE	Provide and promote DoE support services to students who are carers. Support services include school counsellors, home-school liaison workers, youth workers and student welfare teams.
2.3.3	DoE	Schools and senior secondary schools to promote appropriate support programs to young student carers to enable them to develop social and psychological supports including friendships, mentoring and opportunities for information.
2.3.4	DHHS	Fund respite services for people requiring care in their own homes, in centres or in the form of recreational activities to promote health and wellbeing of people who require care and their carers.
2.3.5	DHHS	Continue to fund advocacy support for carers in their caring role.
2.3.6	All Agencies	Ensure that there are human resource policies in place to support staff who have caring responsibilities.
2.3.7	DEDTA	Provide information and advice on the sport, recreation and physical activity opportunities available for carers, especially young carers, and the people receiving care.

2.3.8	All Agencies	Encourage staff to support colleagues/individuals who have caring responsibilities.
2.3.9	DPAC	Promote the Companion Card to people with disability with a life-long need for attendant care support, as a means of accessing community venues, activities and events.
ACTION 2.4: BUILD NATURAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE FOR CARERS		
2.4.1	DHHS / DoE / DPAC / DPEM	Build preparedness of carers (including young carers) and people receiving care in the event of a natural disaster.
2.4.2	DoE	Ensure student carers are aware of support available to them in the event of a natural disaster.
ACTION 2.5: INCLUDE CARERS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES		
2.5.1	DPAC	Work with local government to provide opportunities to involve carers in community life and activities.

PRIORITY 3: CARER PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

Policy Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve carers in the development and evaluation of policies, programs and services that affect them and their caring role.
Policy Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers are to be respected as a valued member of the care team, and their expertise and experience recognised and used in the development and evaluation of policies, programs and services that affect them and the people receiving care. • Complaints by carers on decisions and services that affect them and their caring role are to be resolved promptly and without any fear of reprisal.
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions made in a service delivery context affect carers and often require their support and cooperation. Tasmanian Government agencies, such as the Department of Health and Human Services, have a range of policies that support carer/family participation in decision-making. Improved cross-agency awareness and implementation of policies will ensure more effective carer participation in the decision-making processes that affect those they care for. • The involvement of the carer can benefit the service provider as carers have a unique insight and first-hand knowledge of the needs and requirements of the person receiving care; in turn, the care recipient benefits from having a strong, trusting and well-informed care team. • Particular strategies are needed to involve young student carers in decision making without undermining the natural relationships between family members (eg parent-child relationship). • Processes for involving carers must recognise that caring relationships change over time and that some communities will have different approaches to communicating about options, participating in decision-making and determining who will be involved.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers are regarded as key partners in the care team. • Carers are involved in care-support planning, delivery and evaluation processes.

ACTION 3.1: PROMOTE THE BENEFITS OF CARER PARTICIPATION

3.1.1	DHHS	Promote to the health and community care professionals (including doctors, specialists, nurses and those with a prescribing role) the importance and value of involving carers at all levels of service delivery and at different stages of a care-recipient's life.
3.1.2	DHHS	Develop and promote good examples of carer participation at all levels of decision-making.
3.1.3	DoE	Promote the benefits of participation in decision-making to young student carers.

ACTION 3.2: INVOLVE CARERS IN PLANNING AND SERVICE DELIVERY

3.2.1	DHHS	Facilitate the views, experience and knowledge of carers being considered in the support planning processes for people with disability.
3.2.4	DHHS / DoE DPAC	Where appropriate, identify carers as a key stakeholder group for consultation and engagement in the development and evaluation of government policies, programs and services that affect carers and/or the people receiving care.
3.2.5	DHHS / DPAC	Continue to encourage carers participation on advisory bodies such as the Premier's Disability Advisory Council and the Minister's Disability Advisory Committee.

ACTION 3.3 – ESTABLISH A COMPLAINTS MECHANISM

3.3.1	DHHS	Ensure that there are clear complaints processes that are easily understood and accessible to carers.
-------	------	---

PRIORITY 4: DEVELOP ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Policy Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase the level of recognition of carers.• Improve the level of support and services to carers.• Involve carers in the development and evaluation of policies, programs and services that affect them and their caring role.
Policy Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government agencies are to be given appropriate training to understand and support the needs of carers.
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing the skills and knowledge base of Tasmanian Government agencies employees is beneficial in terms of productivity, efficiency and effectiveness.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Government workforce that is better informed and trained to understand, and help to meet the needs, of carers.

ACTION 4.1: BUILD THE CAPACITY OF TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES		
4.1.1	DoE	Provide professional development for school support workers, social workers and school psychologists to ensure they deliver appropriate advice and guidance to young student carers.
4.1.2	DoE	Provide opportunities for school support workers, social workers and school psychologists to share good practice in relation to working with student carers.
ACTION 4.2: IMPROVE TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES RESOURCES AND KNOWLEDGE OF CARERS		
4.2.1	DPAC	Promote the role of carers through the newly established Carers Advisory Council.
4.2.2	DHHS	In partnership with carer support organisations, work with carers to establish appropriate policy, programs and service delivery outcomes that are meaningful to carers.
4.2.3	DHHS	Develop partnerships with appropriate Tasmanian Government agencies and non-government organisations to ensure effective, culturally sensitive practices are developed for culturally and linguistically diverse communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Department of Health and Human Services policies promoting carer engagement:

Department of Health and Human Services, *Your Care, Your Say: Strategic Framework and Action Plan*, 2009

www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/about_the_department/your_care_your_say

Department of Health and Human Services, Statewide and Mental Health Services (SMHS), *Consumer and Carer Participation Framework*, [2007]

www.dhhs.tas.gov.au