



# SUPPORTING TASMANIAN CARERS

Tasmanian Carer Action Plan  
2021-2024







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# Acronyms

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<b>CGSP</b>	Carer Gateway service providers
<b>CIRG</b>	Carer Issues Reference Group
<b>CSR</b>	Communities, Sport and Recreation
<b>CTAS</b>	Carers Tasmania
<b>DoE</b>	Department of Education
<b>DoH</b>	Department of Health
<b>DHHS</b>	Department of Health and Human Services
<b>DPAC</b>	Department of Premier and Cabinet
<b>LGBTIQ+</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer/Questioning+
<b>MDCG</b>	Minister's Disability Consultative Group
<b>MHFFT</b>	Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania
<b>PDAC</b>	Premier's Disability Advisory Council
<b>PESRAC</b>	Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council
<b>SSMO</b>	State Service Management Office
<b>SDAC</b>	Australian Bureau of Statistics: Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers
<b>THS</b>	Tasmanian Health Service
<b>TSS</b>	Tasmanian State Service
<b>HACC</b>	Tasmanian Home and Community Care
<b>TSS</b>	Tasmanian State Service
<b>NDIS</b>	National Disability Insurance Scheme
<b>CCEC</b>	Consumer Community Engagement Councils
<b>COTA</b>	Council on Active Ageing
<b>TWPP</b>	Training and Work Pathways Program

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# Minister's Foreword

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Carers play a significant role in our community. However, many of us are not aware of the enormous contribution carers make, or fully appreciate the challenges they face every day.

A person can become a carer at any point in their life journey – as a child, a young person, an adult or a retiree. It might be your family, and it might be your neighbour.

Carers provide support to their loved ones because of disability, mental illness, drug or alcohol issues, dementia, or health conditions - from chronic illness, frailty in ageing, to palliative care.

The unique journey of carers means that many do not see themselves as 'carers' – they do what they do because it is a natural part, or extension of, their relationship with the person they care for.

Carers report that caring for their loved ones can be rewarding and satisfying. However, there is a personal cost in assuming a caring role. Carers face more challenges, compared to the general population, in regard to health and wellbeing, income, employment and social interactions.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented significant and unprecedented challenges to the Tasmanian community, and the Tasmanian Government thanks our carers who were at the forefront, and who stepped up to ensure that people in their care were protected and supported.

We acknowledge carers resilience and strength during such challenging times, and for providing comfort to those who needed support.

It is now time to look forward, to secure Tasmania's future, and I am pleased to release our *Supporting Tasmanian Carers: Tasmanian Carer Action Plan 2021-2024 (Supporting Tasmanian Carers)*. Our Plan builds on the success of our previous Action Plan 2017-2020, with three key action areas to support Tasmanian carers: Recognition, Access and Participation, and Learning.

While there has been good progress in recognition of the vital role of carers in Tasmania, at the forefront of this new Action Plan is the introduction of Carer Recognition legislation, which will formally



acknowledge the thousands of carers in our community, and promote and value the importance of care relationships. This is our centrepiece action.

Our Action Plan also includes establishing a Carers Week community grants program, which will fund organisations to deliver events to celebrate National Carers Week and increase awareness of services available to carers.

*Supporting Tasmanian Carers* strengthens the Tasmanian Government's commitment to continue to work closely with Carers Tasmania, Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania, and other key stakeholders to ensure carers have access to the services and support they need and also have opportunities to maximise their participation in all areas of life.

I thank our stakeholders and advocates for their contribution to *Supporting Tasmanian Carers*, which will help shape the future direction for carers in Tasmania.

Most importantly, I thank all carers for their dedication to ensuring more Tasmanians have the opportunity to connect with, be part of, and contribute to, their community. Together we will create a community and culture which encourages and supports participation of carers in all areas of Tasmanian life.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Rockliff'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

**Jeremy Rockliff MP**  
**Minister for Community Services and Development**

# Introduction

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The Tasmanian Government acknowledges the vital role and significant contribution of unpaid carers to the health, wellbeing and security of their family members and friends who are in need of support and assistance.

Carers deserve recognition for what they do in our communities and for their intrinsic value in our society and it is important that they are recognised and respected as individuals as well as key partners in the broader care support network.

This Action Plan follows on from, and consolidates, the outcomes achieved through the *Tasmanian Carer Action Plan 2017-20* and the *Tasmanian Carer Policy 2016*. A key action is the introduction of carer recognition legislation.

A key commitment in the former Action Plan was to review the definition of a carer. The Department of Communities Tasmania (Communities Tasmania) consulted Carers Tasmania, Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania (MHFFT) Inc, Tasmanian and Australian government agencies on a new definition. This led to a recognition that the role of an unpaid informal carer is a very personal one, and that any attempts to arrive at a detailed definition will not be able to fully capture this personal and often complex role and experience.

The Australian Government is the primary provider of funding and services for carers. These services are accessible through the Carer Gateway which is delivered in Tasmania by Carers Tasmania through Care2Serve<sup>2</sup>.

*Supporting Tasmanian Carers: Tasmanian Carer Action Plan 2021-2024 (Supporting Tasmanian Carers)* seeks to complement, and not duplicate services. The focus of the Action Plan is to support access to services and participation in community, enhance the recognition of carers, and ensure carer's voices are considered in the development of Tasmanian Government policy and programs.

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**The Tasmanian Government acknowledge that there are many other people who perform caring roles in the Tasmanian community, which is why we have also used the terms 'informal' and 'unpaid' when describing carers. However, for the purposes of this Action Plan the term 'carer' applies to you if you care for family members or friends in an unpaid informal role<sup>1</sup>.**

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# I. Who is a Carer?

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Many people are carers. The focus of *Supporting Tasmanian Carers* is the more than 80 100 Tasmanians who provide support to family members and friends as unpaid and informal carers.

Carers Tasmania is the peak body for carers in Tasmania and represents all informal carers in the State. Carers Tasmania uses the following definition:

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**A carer is someone who provides unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic or life limiting condition alcohol or drug dependence or who are frail and aged<sup>3</sup>.**

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For the purposes of *Supporting Tasmanian Carers*, this definition will be used. This is an inclusive approach which identifies the key attributes of a carer in clear and concise language. The definition of carer will also be considered in the development of carer recognition legislation, a key action in this plan.

Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania advocates for families and friends of people affected by mental ill-health; it prefers not to use the term 'carer'. MHFFT's members are families and friends who support a person affected by mental ill health and provide emotional and practical support. They may be the partner, parent, friend or child of the person, and may not live with the person they support.



Every carer's journey is different. Their role and how they came to it will be different. A person's caring role may be:

- Lifelong – an ageing parent or a partner or child with disability, acquired injury or chronic illness
- Short term – due to injury, acute illness, or end-of-life care
- Episodic – due to mental ill health or degenerative conditions.

Anyone can become a carer at any time during their life – as a child, a young person, an adult, in retirement or old age. They may be caring for their partner, parent, child, sister or brother, a relative or a friend. They may be carers for a few months, several years or decades. The unique journey of carers means that many do not see themselves as 'carers' – they do what they do because it is a natural part, or extension of, their relationship with that person.



# I. Who is a Carer?

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Carers are usually family, or sometimes friends, of the person in need and are often the main caregiver or supporter. They may not be easily identifiable and therefore may not be known to carer agencies and services, receive support for their caring role, or know where or how to access support for their caring role.

We also know that some carers do not think of themselves as 'carers', and identify their caring role in terms of their relationship eg parent, child, sibling etc.

Children and young people who are carers can be at particular risk of not being recognised and supported in their caring role.

A carer may be caring for more than one person or a person may have more than one carer. Carers may also care for each other. Some carers will be supported by paid individual support workers who are colloquially referred to as carers. While other community members also have important caring roles – such as kinship carers or paid carers; they perform these roles under different and formalised structures and are not captured within this Action Plan.

## **Why have we changed the definition?**

In 2017, carers told us that the carer definition in the Tasmanian Government's Carer Policy 2016<sup>4</sup> did not reflect their lived experiences.

- They felt that the legal language used in the definition did not reflect their role.
- Mental health carers felt that many definitions did not acknowledge the episodic nature of the care they provide, the way they are often 'on call' or provide significant supervision (often without even living with the person) to ensure the person they care for remains safe and well. In this situation carers described their role as providing a 'safety net' for the person they care for.

As a result, the *Tasmanian Carer Action Plan 2017-2020* included an action to:

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**Review the definition of carer in the Carer Policy, in consultation with key agencies and community organisations, so all carers affected by the Carer Policy see themselves and their role in the definition (Action 1.5).**

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The introduction of carer recognition legislation under this Action Plan will provide a further opportunity to consult with carers about the definition.



## 2. What the Data Tells us About Carers

### The Tasmanian Caring Experience

In 2018, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) reported that there were 80 100 carers in Tasmania<sup>5</sup>. This represents 15.5 per cent of the Tasmanian population and is the highest per capita rate of carers in all the states and territories.

It should be noted that the ABS used a slightly different definition of 'carer' in its survey:

**A carer is defined as a person who provides any informal assistance, in terms of help or supervision, to people with disability or older people (aged 65 years and over). Assistance must be ongoing, or likely to be ongoing, for at least six months<sup>6</sup>.**

**While using a different definition of 'young carer' to the ABS (under 25 years of age<sup>7</sup>); Carers Tasmania estimates that the number of young carers of school age could be as high as one in every 15 students in Tasmania.**

### Carers – the Tasmanian Statistical Profile



**80 100 carers**, representing 15.5 per cent of all Tasmanians.



The average age of Tasmanian carers is **52.5** (51.9 female and 53.4 male).



**9 300** (11.6 per cent) of Tasmanian carers are under the age of 25.



**Females** were more likely to be carers (15.8 per cent of all females) than males (14.8 per cent of all males).



**65 OR OLDER**

**28 per cent** of carers are 65 years or older.



**21 per cent** of Tasmanian carers are of prime working age (25 to 44 years old).



**43.7 per cent** of carers reported having a disability, compared with 22.9 per cent of the non-carer Tasmanian population.



Only **46 per cent** of Tasmanian carers are employed (either part-time or full-time) compared to 61.4 per cent of non-carers.



On average, Tasmanian carers earn approximately **\$190 less per week** than their non-carer counterparts (carers median gross income per week \$520, non-carers \$710).



Tasmanian carers have a **lower labour force participation rate** (49.4 per cent) than people who are not carers (64.6 per cent).



**Nearly half** (47.9 per cent) of all carers live in a households that fall into the lowest two tiers of average gross income, almost twice that of non-carers (26.4 per cent).

## 2. What the Data Tells us About Carers



### The Value of Informal Care in 2020

Carers Australia commissioned Deloitte Access Economics to undertake research on the *Value of Informal Care in 2020*<sup>8</sup>. The study estimates that in 2020 there were almost 2.8 million informal carers in Australia, comprised of 906 000 primary carers and 1.9 million non-primary carers. This represents a 5.5 per cent increase since the ABS *2018 Survey on Disability, Ageing and Carers*<sup>9</sup> survey due to population growth.

The research estimates that the demand for informal carers will grow from around 1.25 million in 2020 to 1.54 million in 2030, representing a 23 per cent increase.

In contrast, the supply of informal carers will rise from 674 000 to 780 000, an increase of 16 per cent. This will see the carer ratio fall by 3.2 per cent from 53.8 per cent in 2020 to 50.6 per cent in 2030.

The research by Deloitte Access Economics also explored the economic value provided by carers and found that:

- Carers in Australia provided an estimated total of 2.2 billion hours of informal care in 2020, which equates to each carer providing roughly 15 hours of care per week. This is a considerable increase from the 2015 total of 1.9 billion hours of care.
- Over one third (37 per cent) of primary carers spent more than 40 hours caring each week.
- In 2020, if informal carers were to be replaced by carers employed by the formal sector, it would cost an estimated \$36.12 per carer, per hour.
- In 2020, it is estimated that 22 per cent of primary carers were employed full-time in comparison to the general population average of 43 per cent.



## 2. What the Data Tells us About Carers

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### COVID-19 Caring experience

The *COVID-19 Carer Survey (2020)*<sup>10</sup> conducted by the Caring Fairly Coalition aimed to assess the impact of the pandemic on unpaid carers' work and income, expenses, health and wellbeing and access to services and supports. Overall the results demonstrate an impact on unpaid carers across Australia with 60 per cent of respondents reporting that they had lost some or all of the supports for the person they care for and almost half (47 per cent) reporting losing supports for themselves.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, 44 per cent of carers said they had increased the amount of time spent providing unpaid care support. Many carers cited a reduction of services for the person they care for as a reason for their increased caring responsibilities.

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**'My daughter's days during the week were full with various groups and work. So she was supported or at work for a total of 35 hours a week. Now due to COVID-19 she has only six hours of support a week and the rest is left to myself and my husband.'**

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### 2020 National Carer Survey

In 2020, Carers Australia supported Carers NSW to build on its biannual carer study and conduct the *2020 National Carer Study*<sup>11</sup>.

The typical respondent for the study was a female primary carer of working age with a high school education, not participating in paid employment and the typical person being cared for was an adult son with physical disability who is not able to be left alone for more than a few hours.

Most respondents provided 40 or more hours of care per week, and more than half had been caring for 20 years or more.

Nearly half of the carers who responded were experiencing high or very high psychological distress, and one in three felt highly socially isolated.

One in three respondents said they never get time out from their caring responsibilities, with only around half having enough time to keep on top of other responsibilities.

It was relatively uncommon for carers to be asked about their own needs when accessing services or on behalf of the person they care for and carers reported challenges getting information about available services, and the time and energy it took to organise them. Waiting periods for services were also a common challenge.

One in four carers reported spending more money than they made in the past 12 months. Exiting employment and reducing working hours were also reported as common impacts of caring.

### 3. Supporting Tasmanian Carers – Service Mapping

This map details the services across Tasmanian Government agencies that currently support or assist carers. It also highlights the primary role the Australian Government plays in supporting carers and providing funding for a range of supports, services and financial assistance to carers to help them to remain engaged in the community, participate in the workforce and stay healthy while continuing their caring role. In Tasmania, Carer Gateway services are delivered by Care2Serve (Carers Tasmania).

\* For further information on the Tasmanian Government services and activities listed below, see Appendix A.

#### Australian Government Carer Gateway

The Australian Government’s Carer Gateway service providers (CGSPs) launched in April 2020.

CGSPs assist carers to access a range of services and supports delivered in person, by telephone and online including support planning, counselling, respite, targeted financial support through carer directed support packages, peer support groups, coaching and information and advice<sup>12</sup>.

Care2Serve is the CGSP for Tasmania. Care2Serve has offices in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie. Care2Serve is a charity owned by Carers Tasmania.



#### Recognition

Carers Tasmania funding (Communities Tasmania and DoH) – peak body funding to provide research, advocacy, representation, and policy advice in relation to carers.

Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania funding (DoH) – funding to provide support, education and systemic advocacy for families and friends.

Carers Week activities (Communities Tasmania / all Agencies) to recognise carers.

Promotion of carer related supports (Communities Tasmania).

Premier’s Disability Advisory Council (Communities Tasmania) to provide advice in relation to carer issues.



### 3. Supporting Tasmanian Carers – Service Mapping



#### Access and Participation

Tasmanian Home and Community Care (HACC) Program (DoH) to provide support for carers of eligible HACC clients.

Peer and Carer workers – Statewide Mental Health Services (DoH) to engage with and support carers.

Rethink Mental Health 2020 (DoH) aims to address carer needs, increase the capacity of consumers and carers and improve engagement with carers.

Social Work Services (THS) to provide psychosocial support for carers.

THS Consumer and Community Engagement Principles (THS) to ensure patient-centred care that is respectful of and responsive to patients, carers and consumers.

Neighbourhood Houses (Communities Tasmania) including a partnership to provide Carer Gateway kiosks.

State Service Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Framework (DPAC) to support employees who are carers.

TSS Carers Toolkit to support employees who are carers (SSMO).

Staff Wellbeing Framework to support employees who are carers (DoE).

Informal Kinship Care Review to support informal kinship carers (Communities Tasmania).

Companion Card to support participation for people with disability who need carer support (Communities Tasmania).

Tasmania's Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy 2019-22 to provide advice to carers.

#### Learning

Universal and targeted support for Tasmanian learners' wellbeing, participation, engagement and learning needs (DoE) to provide assistance to learners with caring responsibilities.

2018–2021 Department of Education Child and Student Wellbeing Strategy: Safe, Well and Positive Learners (DoE) to support the wellbeing of learners with caring responsibilities.

Annual Student Wellbeing Survey (DoE) to support the wellbeing of learners with caring responsibilities.

Students who are Carers Policy and Procedure (TasTAFE) to support students who are carers.

Adult Learning Strategy (State Growth) to support carers to engage or re-engage in learning.

Training and Work Pathways Program (State Growth) providing targeted activities to address needs of target groups including carers.

## 4. Supporting Tasmanian Carers – Action Summary

### Australian Government Carer Payments

The Australian Government, through Services Australia, provides eligible carers with financial assistance, including the Carer Payment and Carer Allowance<sup>13</sup>.

In Tasmania, Services Australia reported 16 843 carers received the Carer Allowance (income supplement) and 9 228 received the Carer Payment (income support) for the period 1 April to 30 June 2020<sup>14</sup>. Of these recipients, 18 193 were female and 7 878 were male.

### NDIS

Respite gives carers occasional short-term breaks from their caring responsibility. Carers can better manage their wellbeing when they can take a break with peace of mind.

Participants of NDIS can use funds in their plan to provide respite for their carers.

### Disability Gateway

The Australian Government is trialling a Disability Gateway to serve as a single point of information for people with disability and their carers.

### Department of Veterans' Affairs

The Department of Veterans' Affairs provides specific supports for carers of someone who has served in the Australian Defence Force.



### I. Recognition

- I.1** Consult on and introduce Carer Recognition legislation including a review of carer principles and governance structures (Communities Tasmania).
- I.2** Establish Carers Week small grants program (Communities Tasmania).
- I.3** Investigate options for an annual Carer Forum (Communities Tasmania/CIRG).
- I.4** Review Carers Week activities to identify opportunities to increase recognition and awareness of the role of carers (Communities Tasmania).
- I.5** Investigate options to include carer recognition in Communities Tasmania's annual grant programs (Communities Tasmania).
- I.6** Consult carers in the Review of the *Disability Services Act 2011* (Communities Tasmania).



## 4. Supporting Tasmanian Carers – Action Summary



### 2. Access and Participation

- 2.1** Pilot a digital literacy program for carers through Libraries Tasmania (DoE).
- 2.2** Review the Housing Connect application process to ensure carers are identified and included Communities Tasmania.
- 2.3** Review the TSS Workplace Flexibility Policy to support employees with caring responsibilities (SSMO).
- 2.4** Maintain and enhance flexible working arrangements in State government agencies, including the Carer Toolkit (Communities Tasmania / SSMO).
- 2.5** Implement the outcomes of the State Service Review as they relate to employees with caring responsibilities. (SSMO / Communities Tasmania).
- 2.6** Review the Tasmanian Consumer and Carer Participation Framework to improve engagement with consumers and carers (DoH).
- 2.7** Support distribution of the Carers Tasmanian iCare book in THS hospitals (DoH).
- 2.8** Develop clinical guidelines for working with carers (DoH).
- 2.9** Develop referral pathways for patients and carers to Aboriginal health and migrant support organisations (DoH).



### 3. Learning

- 3.1** Develop targeted information and referral resources for learners with caring responsibilities (DoE).
- 3.2** Promote resources for young carers to DoE learners, schools, and support staff (DoE).
- 3.3** Implement the Adult Learning Strategy to support carers to engage or re-engage in learning (Skills Tasmania).

## 5. Supporting Tasmanian Carers – Action Plan

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### SERVICE MAP REVIEW

**Key Action – Review the Service Map annually to ensure it is up-to-date and connections are maintained.**

The Service Map comprises programs and services that are ongoing, continuing or ‘business as usual’. This does not mean that these programs are static. The significant disruption to service delivery during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic meant that many programs and services have had to adapt, and as recovery measures are embedded, it will be important that the needs of carers are taken into account.

Tasmanian Government agencies will review the Service Map annually and provide updates. Agencies will only be required to report to CIRG on these activities and programs ‘by exception’ – that is when there is a significant change to the service, eligibility or other policy settings.

In 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, many Tasmanian carers chose to restrict access to their homes, and their movements outside the home, to protect the people they cared for.

The Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council's (PESRAC) Interim Report (in July 2020) and Final Report (March 2021) made a number of recommendations which are relevant to enhancing access and participation for carers in education, employment and community life. All PESRAC recommendations were accepted by the Tasmanian Government. The implementation of some of the recommendations is expected to have flow-on benefits for carers. While these recommendations are not included as ‘New Actions’, they are outlined below under ‘Governance’ and any updates will be captured as part of the annual review of the Service Map.

**‘The health services are great at what they do, but they do not seem to have the carer in mind. It is always about the recipient and of course, it should be, but carers are a vital part of the person’s life. They need to be considered more.’**

*Carers Tasmania members, 2021.*



# I. Recognition

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## I.1 Consult on and introduce Carer Recognition legislation including a review of carer principles and governance structures.

The legislation will formally recognise the thousands of carers in our community and promote and value the importance of care relationships. The legislation will include a set of principles about the significance of care relations and include obligations for organisations that interact with people in care relationships.

A consultation process to inform development of Carers Legislation will commence in 2021. The Principles outlined in the Carer Policy 2016, and reflected in this Action Plan, will inform the development of the legislation.

## I.2 Establish Carers Week community grants program.

Funding will be allocated to introduce a new small grants program of \$60 000 over three years. This will give organisations the opportunity to deliver events to celebrate National Carers Week and increase awareness of services available to carers. This will be implemented from 2021, and administered by the Tasmanian Government.

## I.3 Investigate options for an annual Carer Forum.

A one-day Carers Forum will be planned in consultation with Carers Tasmania, MHFFT and CIRG. Carers and Family Carers Peak Advisory Council members will also be invited to share their experiences with Tasmanian government agency representatives, to contribute to developing solutions to address emerging issues; share best practice; and identify opportunities to promote recognition of carers and access and participation.

Each Forum will have a 'themed' topic, which could include:

- Learnings from COVID-19
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse carers

- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer / Questioning+ (LGBTIQ) carers
- Aboriginal carers
- Young carers
- Flexible employment and re-entering the workplace
- Interactions with police and emergency services

## I.4 Review Carers Week activities to identify opportunities to increase recognition and awareness of the role of carers.

All agencies will review their Carers Week activities. Depending on the agency's role, Carers Week recognition activities will have an internal (employees) and/or external focus (carers as clients).

## I.5 Investigate opportunities to include carers recognition and awareness activities in Communities Tasmania's annual grants rounds.

Communities Tasmania delivers a wide range of grants to build community capacity to meet the community, sport and recreation needs of Tasmanians and support the achievement of government priorities. Carer recognition and needs will be included in the planning for and targeting of small grants rounds.

## I.6 Consult carers in the review of Disability Services Act 2011.

Carer issues will be considered in the delivery of the *2021 Review of the Disability Services Act 2011*. The review will ensure contemporary legislation that aligns with the role of the Tasmanian Government in supporting Tasmanians with disability; support the delivery of high quality and safe services for people with disability and support national and international commitments. Carers will be consulted during this process.

## 2. Access and Participation

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### **2.1 Pilot a digital literacy program for carers through Libraries Tasmania.**

As part of its broader role supporting digital inclusion in the community, Libraries Tasmania will work with Carers Tasmania to deliver a pilot digital literacy program for carers.

Through the program, carers residing in Burnie will receive a digital device from Carers Tasmania and digital literacy support from Libraries Tasmania.

The aim of the program is that carers develop the skills and confidence needed to use their digital device, including connecting to the internet and using videoconferencing platforms. An evaluation of the pilot will inform thinking on a broader roll out strategy.

### **2.2 Review the Housing Connect application process to ensure carers are identified and included.**

Housing Connect helps low income Tasmanians, including people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, to find or maintain appropriate and affordable homes.

Through Housing Connect people can apply for affordable private rentals, social housing and supported accommodation, or they can be safely housed during a time of crisis. Housing Connect can also provide people with housing related support and information, advice, and referral to other support services available to them in Tasmania.

### **2.3 Review the Tasmanian State Service Workplace Flexibility Policy to support employees with caring responsibilities.**

Work has commenced on a draft Tasmanian State Service Workplace Flexibility Policy. The focus of this work during COVID-19 on the development of a range of relevant resources to support employees with caring responsibilities.

Further work will be undertaken on reviewing the Workplace Flexibility policy post-COVID-19.

### **2.4 Maintain and enhance flexible working arrangements in State government agencies.**

The State Service Carer Toolkit, launched in October 2019, supports employees to manage their work and care responsibilities. PESRAC also recommended that Government agencies should embed the flexible working arrangements used during the COVID-19 suppression period, to support the recruitment and advancement of women in the State Service (Recommendation 49). Embedding the flexible arrangements will also benefit employees who are carers.

### **2.5 Implement the outcomes relevant to carers of the State Service review.**

The outcomes of the State Service Review will be assessed to determine any implications for carers who are Tasmanian State Service employees.

## 2. Access and Participation

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### **2.6 Review of the Tasmanian Consumer and Carer Participation Framework.**

The Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Directorate will review the Tasmanian Consumer and Carer Participation Framework. The review will update the Framework to be more contemporary and evidence based, which will support improved engagement with consumers and carers.

### **2.7 Support distribution of the Carers Tasmania iCare book in THS hospitals.**

The Tasmanian Health Service will work with Carers Tasmania to support distribution of the iCare book in THS hospital facilities. The iCare booklet is a resource for family and friends supporting someone in hospital.

### **2.8 Tasmanian Health Service Social Work Teams to develop clinical guidelines for working with carers.**

The THS Social Work Teams will develop clinical guidelines for working with carers that will provide information about the role of carers in the medical journey, including referring to other support services as required.

### **2.9 Tasmanian Health Service Social Work Teams to develop referral pathways to Aboriginal health and migrant support organisations.**

Recognising the diversity of carers and the people they care for, the THS Social Work Teams will develop referral pathways to Aboriginal health organisations and migrant support organisations for patients and their carers where appropriate.





## 3. Learning

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### 3.1 Develop targeted information and referral resources for learners with caring responsibilities.

The Department of Education will update its information and referral resources for learners with caring responsibilities that are a barrier to engagement at school.

### 3.2 Promote resources for young carers to Department of Education learners, schools, and support staff.

The Department of Education will promote the new resources and related supports available for young carers to learners, schools, and professional support staff.

### 3.3 Implement the Adult Learning Strategy 2020-23.

The Adult Learning Strategy – skills for work and life supports lifelong learning for all Tasmanians to improve the work and life skills of individuals and to help them find fulfilling careers.

The strategy will help ensure that all Tasmanians, including carers, are better supported to engage or re-engage in learning to improve their employment opportunities and build their personal confidence and mental health and wellbeing.

A priority of the strategy is to increase community engagement with adult learning through continuing conversations with the community, providing new training opportunities in priority industries, and supporting people with barriers to engaging in learning.

‘I hid my caring role and didn’t talk to others or friends about it.’

‘Like a lot of young carers, I didn’t want to bring friends home.’

‘I had missed too much school. I wanted to be a nurse.’

‘I had to be extra good at school, help at home, and make sure there were no extra hassles for mum.’

‘I didn’t think I was a carer. It wasn’t until my guidance counsellor in high school said I was a carer that I realised.’

*Young Carers Roundtable (October 2020)*

## 6. Supporting Tasmanian Carers – Governance

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The Carer Issues Reference Group (CIRG) has oversighted the implementation of the *Carer Action Plan 2017-2020*. The membership of the group has included relevant state and territory agencies and the two funded carer organisations – Carers Tasmania and MHFFT.

Communities Tasmania will continue to convene the CIRG, however it is anticipated that its role and functions will be reviewed as part of the consultation process to develop carer recognition legislation.

A new role for CIRG will be to liaise with agencies about the implementation of the PESRAC recommendations, as they relate to carers' digital inclusion and participation in employment and education settings.

Relevant recommendations include:

### **PESRAC Interim Report**

**Recommendation 50** – PESRAC recommended that priority be given to work to 'identify, engage and support vulnerable cohorts that may have ongoing disproportionate adverse impacts during recovery, including through disruption to education training and employment'.

As noted above, during COVID-19, many carers self-isolated for extended periods.

It is likely that carers, including young carers, experienced disadvantage as a result.

**Recommendation 51** – PESRAC recommended that Vulnerable Student Panels across all sectors should be continued, appropriately resourced, embedded within the education system and bolstered by a comprehensive case management system.'

The COVID-19 response and lockdowns disrupted learning for everyone, including young carers. Vulnerable Student Panels were put in place to mitigate the impact and strengthen the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable students.

**Recommendation 60** – PESRAC that 'where digital service delivery has delivered improved outcomes from a client perspective, these changes should be maintained.'

The COVID-19 experience has demonstrated the success of alternate delivery models in a wide range of community settings including health and education.

### **PESRAC Final Report**

**Recommendation 19** – PESRAC recommended priority access to Trade Training Centres for vocational training for both school-age and adult learners.

**Recommendation 23** – Jobs Tasmania to 'address the needs of the recently out-of-work and under-employed as priority target groups, and young (under 25) jobseekers as capacity provides

Re-training and re-entry to the workforce can be challenging for people who have left the workforce because of their caring responsibilities.

The Carer Issues Reference Group will also be tasked with providing advice on the needs of population cohorts including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tasmanians, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and LGBTIQ+. This role will complement and support the annual Carer forum (see Action 1.3 above).

## 6. Supporting Tasmanian Carers – Governance



### **Current CIRG membership**

#### **Funded carer organisations:**

##### **Carers Tasmania / Care2Serve**

Carers Tasmania was established in 1993. It operates as a peak body, working with government, health and community sectors to enhance service provision and improve the conditions for family carers through policy development, research and advocacy. Carers Tasmania is part of a national network of carer organisations in each state and territory that are also peaks, as part of Carers Australia.

Care2Serve was established by Carers Tasmania as a wholly-owned charitable entity through which services would be delivered. In so doing, Carers Tasmania has separated advocacy and services to ensure best practice governance. Care2Serve plays a significant role in providing carer supports in Tasmania as the sole Carer Gateway service provider. Care2Serve has offices in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie.

##### **Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania**

Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania (MHFFT) is a peak body funded by DoH to represent families, friends, and carers of people living with mental illness. It provides systemic advocacy from a family and carer perspective, drawing on lived experience to improve mental health services.

MHFFT see family members, friends and unpaid carers as playing a unique role in the recovery journey of people living with mental illness because they know the person, and most likely knew them before they became unwell. They hold a unique source of information about the person's life beyond their diagnosis of mental illness, including information about their interests, skills, beliefs and ambitions.

##### **Government agencies:**

Tasmanian Government – Department of Communities Tasmania, Department of Education, Department of Health.

Australian Government – Department of Health, Department of Social Services and National Disability Insurance Agency.



## 7. Background – Tasmanian Carer Action Plan 2017-2020

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The *Tasmanian Carer Policy* was released in 2016. Its aim was to recognise the commitment of Tasmanian carers and support them in their caring role as well as supporting active participation in economic, social and community life for themselves and the people for whom they care. The Policy Objectives were to:

- 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.

These objectives informed the development of the *Tasmanian Carer Action Plan 2017-2020* (the first Action Plan) which contained 22 actions,

- Seven actions have been completed. Some of these actions are also incorporated into the Service Map.
- 15 actions are ongoing and are captured in the Service Map. Some ongoing actions are also incorporated into the new actions (more information is provided in Appendix B).

As noted on page 8, the definition of carer used in the Carer Policy has been reviewed and replaced with a simpler, easy to understand definition. This was a key commitment in the first Action Plan.

The Carer Policy also included information on the national and state policy context and statistical data on carers. This information is now out-of-date.

Two key elements of the Carer Policy have been retained and have informed the development of *Supporting Tasmanian Carers*, the Policy Principles (below) and the Policy Scope. There will be a further opportunity to review the Policy Principles and Scope as part of the development of carer recognition legislation (Action 1.1).

### Policy Principles (2016)

The Principles underpinning *Supporting Tasmanian Carers* are as follows:

1. Carers are to be acknowledged and treated as individuals with their own needs within and beyond their caring role.
2. Carers are to be acknowledged as a diverse group of people, coming from all walks of life and life stages.
3. Carers are to be provided with relevant and accessible information and referred to appropriate services to assist them in their caring role.
4. Carers are to be respected as valued members of a care team.
5. Carers' expertise and experience are recognised and used in the development and evaluation of policies, programs and services that affect them and the people receiving care.
6. The development, evaluation and delivery of policies, programs and services for carers are to take into account carers' age, gender identity, sexual orientation, cultural and linguistic background, abilities, religion, geographical location and socio-economic status.
7. To the extent possible, carers are to be supported to enjoy optimum health, social and economic wellbeing, and access to educational and employment opportunities.
8. The carer and the person receiving care are to be regarded as a partnership, in which each person has rights and responsibilities.
9. 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.
10. Government agencies are to be given appropriate support to understand and respond to the needs of carers.

# Appendix A – Service Mapping Explained

## RECOGNITION

Service	Agency
<p><b><i>Carers Tasmania funding</i></b></p> <p>The Department of Communities Tasmania fund Carers Tasmania annually as the peak body for the sector. The core functions of Carers Tasmania as the peak body are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake consultation and research</li> <li>• Support policy development and provide advice</li> <li>• Maintain effective partnerships and collaboration to achieve outcomes</li> <li>• Proactively engage with the sector and the population priority group</li> <li>• Advocate on behalf of and build capacity within the sector and the population priority group</li> </ul> <p>DoH has a service delivery arrangement with Care2Serve and provides annual funding.</p>	<p><b>Communities Tasmania / DoH</b></p>
<p><b><i>Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania funding</i></b></p> <p>DoH provides core funding to Mental Health Families and Friends to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote the rights and responsibilities of family members and carers of mental health consumers;</li> <li>• develop the capacity of mental health family members and carers to participate as carer representatives through the development and facilitation of capacity building activities, including training and mentoring;</li> <li>• develop relationships with other stakeholders to achieve the best possible outcomes for families and carers of people with mental illness;</li> <li>• provide independent family and carer perspectives to policy development, planning and evaluation of mental health services when appropriate through representative engagements; and</li> <li>• provide support to family members and carers through provision of information, advice on referral sources and one on one support as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p><b>DoH</b></p>
<p><b><i>Carers Week Activities</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise annual Department sponsored events during Carers Week to recognise employees who have caring responsibilities and celebrate carers in the community</li> <li>• Promote Carers Week on the Communities Tasmania website</li> <li>• Encourage other departments to also promote Carers Week.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Communities Tasmania / All</b></p>

## Appendix A – Service Mapping Explained

Service	Agency
<p><b>Promotion of carer related supports</b></p> <p>The Department of Communities Tasmania promotes on its website and publications useful links for carers including, but not limited to, Carers Tasmania, Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania, National Carer Gateway, NDIS, My Aged Care and Young Carers Network (Young Carer Bursary).</p>	<p><b>Communities Tasmania</b></p>
<p><b>Premier’s Disability Advisory Council (PDAC)</b></p> <p>The Premier’s Disability Advisory Council (PDAC) was established in 2007. Its primary purpose is to assist the Premier and Government to implement <i>Accessible Island: Tasmania’s Disability Framework for Action 2018-2021</i>.</p> <p>PDAC works with Government and the broader community to promote the inclusion and participation of people with disability and their carers in community life.</p>	<p><b>Communities Tasmania</b></p>

### ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

Service	Agency
<p><b>Tasmanian Home and Community Care (HACC) Program</b></p> <p>The Tasmanian HACC Program funds a range of basic core support services targeted at younger people who live in the Tasmanian community and whose capacity for independent living is at risk due to an acute health event, moderate or mild functional impairment or deterioration of an ongoing condition, and their carers. ‘Younger persons’ are people aged less than 65 years and Aboriginal people aged less than 50 years.</p> <p>Although not a generalised carer support program, it provides some specific services for carers of eligible clients of the HACC Program. Support for carers includes carer counselling, support, information and advocacy; and small levels of respite care, including in home and centre-based care.</p>	<p><b>DoH</b></p>
<p><b>Peer and Carer Workers, Statewide Mental Health Services</b></p> <p>Peer and carer workers are part of the Adult Mental Health Services professional care teams across the state. The peer and carer workers draw upon their own personal lived experience of mental illness and recovery (or caring for someone through this process) to provide authentic engagement and support for people accessing Adult Mental Health Services.</p>	<p><b>DoH</b></p>



## Appendix A – Service Mapping Explained

Service	Agency
<p><b>Rethink Mental Health 2020</b></p> <p><i>Rethink Mental Health 2020</i> is Tasmania’s mental health plan, representing a shared approach to improving mental health outcomes for all Tasmanians. The plan addresses carer needs in several ways, including increasing the capacity of consumers and carers to participate in their own care and the development of services through information and training; increasing advocacy for carers; and monitoring and improving the carer experience through the Carer Experience of Service survey.</p> <p>Additionally, as part of Rethink, a review will be undertaken of the Tasmanian Consumer and Carer Participation Framework (see also Action 2.6). The review will update the Framework to be more contemporary and evidence based, which will support improved engagement with consumers and carers.</p>	<p><b>DoH</b></p>
<p><b>Social Work Services</b></p> <p>Social workers are allied health professionals who are available to provide psychosocial support to individuals, families and community groups including carers.</p> <p>Social workers are available in all public hospitals as well as THS primary health sites including rural hospitals and community health centres and may provide home visiting where required.</p> <p>Social Work interventions are offered alongside existing support clients have from other services as well as from informal and formal carers (e.g. friends, family members, neighbours etc). Involving other services and/or carers in the development and implementation of social work care plans for clients is conditional on client consent.</p>	<p><b>THS</b></p>

# Appendix A – Service Mapping Explained

Service	Agency
<p><b>THS Consumer and Community Engagement Principles</b></p> <p>Providing patient-centred care that is respectful of and responsive to the preferences, needs and values of patients, carers and consumers is a core priority of the THS, as articulated in the THS Consumer and Community Engagement Principles.</p> <p>The THS has Consumer Community Engagement Councils (CCEC) in each region whose role is to ensure that health consumers participate and contribute to operational and clinical functions of service design, redesign and delivery through consultation and involvement with the THS. Members contribute specialist knowledge and expertise by providing consumer, carer and community perspectives.</p> <p>The THS has also formed a statewide Consumer Advisory Panel which convenes quarterly with the DoH Secretary and the CCEC Chairs.</p>	<p><b>THS</b></p>
<p><b>Neighbourhood Houses</b></p> <p>Neighbourhood Houses (Houses) are organisations offering accessible, locally-driven programs which respond to community needs and provide a soft-entry point to community and service systems.</p> <p>An integrated network of 35 Houses supports Tasmanian communities. They are strategically located to lead and coordinate community development in areas of most need. Houses provide a range of community development programs based on identified community needs and resources.</p> <p>Care2Serve has partnered with 13 regional Neighbourhood Houses to offer Carer Gateway Carer Kiosks where carers can access information or have phone or video meetings or counselling sessions with Care2Serve specialist Carer Support Officers, coaches and counsellors.</p>	<p><b>Communities Tasmania</b></p>
<p><b>State Service Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Framework</b></p> <p>The Tasmanian State Service (TSS) is committed to building inclusive workplaces and having a workforce that reflects the diversity of the Tasmanian community. Many Tasmanian State Servants are also carers. This commitment is informed by the following principles, which are embedded in the <i>State Service Diversity and Inclusion Policy</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our employment opportunities are accessible to everyone.</li> <li>• Our employees are valued and respected.</li> <li>• We support our employees to be the best they can be.</li> </ul> <p>The Policy is supported by the <i>State Service Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2017-2020</i>.</p> <p>The Framework sets out the priorities and activities that the TSS will focus on to ensure our management policies and practices are supportive of everyone working, or wishing to work, in the TSS.</p>	<p><b>DPAC (SSMO)</b></p>

## Appendix A – Service Mapping Explained

Service	Agency
<p><b>TSS Carers Toolkit</b></p> <p>The Carers Toolkit resource provides information on ‘who are carers’ and the supports available to carers both within the Tasmanian State Service and externally. Additional information is also provided in stand-alone documents specifically for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees with caring responsibilities on accessing the support available;</li> <li>• Managers and team leaders on supporting carers and fostering an inclusive work environment; and</li> <li>• Work colleagues on supporting peers with caring responsibilities.</li> </ul> <p>The Carers Toolkit will be updated to reflect the proposed Workplace Flexibility Policy (Action 2.4).</p>	<p><b>DPAC (SSMO)</b></p>
<p><b>Staff Wellbeing Framework</b></p> <p>As a large employer, many DoE staff are likely to have caring responsibilities. A staff wellbeing framework is being developed to better support, promote and communicate about staff wellbeing across DoE. The framework seeks to establish a flexible, evidence-based approach for all staff to promote, communicate about, and support staff wellbeing.</p> <p>The Strategy will further support the Department’s Wellbeing Goal under the 2018-2021 <i>Department of Education Strategic Plan, Learners First: Every Learner Every Day</i>.</p>	<p><b>DoE</b></p>
<p><b>Informal Kinship Care Review</b></p> <p>Communities Tasmania completed the <i>Informal Kinship Care Review</i> and in 2021 the Tasmanian Government allocated \$500 000 to immediately commence implementation of the review recommendations over the next 12 months.</p> <p>Under the 2021 Election Commitment – <i>Ensuring the Safety and Wellbeing of Children and Young People</i>, the Government is extending supports for informal kinship carers with an additional \$1.75 million over four years.</p> <p>Supports will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A support and liaison officer in the North-West;</li> <li>• Government concessions for informal kinship carers;</li> <li>• New training opportunities for informal kinship carers;</li> <li>• An information portal for informal kinship carers;</li> <li>• Increased brokerage for the new Informal Kinship Care Program; and</li> <li>• Community based respite services for informal kinship carers.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Communities Tasmania</b></p>



# Appendix A – Service Mapping Explained

Service	Agency
<p><b>Companion Card</b></p> <p>The Companion Card entitles eligible people with lifelong disability to a free ticket for their carer at participating venues and events. A photo ID card is issued to the person with disability to participate in community events and activities, with a carer of their choice.</p> <p>Companion Card holders present their card at participating venues and events when purchasing a ticket or paying an entry fee and receive a ticket for their carer at no extra charge.</p>	<p><b>Communities Tasmania</b></p>
<p><b>Tasmania’s Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy 2019-22</b></p> <p><i>Respect and Protect Older Tasmanians: Tasmania’s Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy 2019-2022</i> supports new and contemporary ways to inform and educate and provide services that respond to the issue of elder abuse. More significantly, the future focus will be on safeguarding and working across government and the community to determine the best way to protect older Tasmanians from abuse and harm.</p> <p>The THS Community Social Work Service offers advice and support to clients and their families impacted by elder abuse. This advisory role may include consultation with the person’s carer and family members (unless the carer is the alleged perpetrator of elder abuse), GPs and other service providers.</p>	<p><b>Communities Tasmania</b></p> <p><b>THS</b></p>

# Appendix A – Service Mapping Explained

## LEARNING

Service	Agency
<p><b>Universal and targeted support for Tasmanian learners’ wellbeing, participation, engagement and learning needs, including young carers</b></p> <p>Young carers may experience barriers to learning and might need additional assistance.</p> <p>The Department of Education provides tiered student support for all learners encompassing services and functions that support engagement and wellbeing for learning.</p> <p>These are provided directly to learners, and through building the capacity of schools to meet a wide range of student needs as part of inclusive practice. Students supports include school-based student support and wellbeing teams, a centralised Student Support Team, student engagement staff, school psychologists, social workers; and targeted additional support for students affected by trauma.</p>	<p><b>DoE</b></p>
<p><b>2018-21 Child and Student Wellbeing Strategy and Annual Student Wellbeing Survey</b></p> <p>The Department of Education launched the Child and Student Wellbeing Survey in 2018. The Strategy supports the Department’s Wellbeing Goal under the <i>2018-2021 Department of Education Strategic Plan, Learners First: Every Learner Every Day</i>.</p> <p>The Strategy guides the development of the Student Wellbeing Survey which students in years 4 – 12 undertake annually.</p> <p>The Survey provides valuable data on the wellbeing of Tasmanian government school students and informs DoE’s approach to student wellbeing at a school and system level.</p> <p>Throughout 2020 DoE’s focus has been supporting the wellbeing of all students, and especially vulnerable cohorts, during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p><b>DoE</b></p>
<p><b>Students who are Carers Policy and Procedure</b></p> <p>TasTAFE has a Students who are Carers Policy and Procedure and is committed to recognising the role of carers, providing ongoing support and continuously considering strategies to improve access and support for carers.</p>	<p><b>TasTAFE</b></p>

## Appendix A – Service Mapping Explained

Service	Agency
<p><b>Adult Learning Strategy 2020-23</b></p> <p><i>The Adult Learning Strategy – skills for work and life</i> supports lifelong learning for all Tasmanians to improve the work and life skills of individuals and to help them find fulfilling careers. Implementation of the Adult Learning Strategy is new Action 3.3.</p> <p>The strategy was developed with input from across government, and the community and business sectors, including carer advocacy groups, to provide a comprehensive policy framework supported by targeted investments.</p> <p>The strategy will help ensure that all Tasmanians, including carers, are better supported to engage or re-engage in learning to improve their employment opportunities and build their personal confidence and mental health and wellbeing. In particular, a priority of the strategy is to increase community engagement with adult learning through continuing conversations with the community, providing new training opportunities in priority industries, and supporting people with barriers to engage in learning.</p>	<p><b>State Growth</b></p>
<p><b>Training and Work Pathways Program</b></p> <p>The program provides grants to eligible individuals or organisations to undertake targeted activities to address specific disadvantages that impact on the ability of a target group or groups, such as carers, to accessing and participating in training and employment.</p>	<p><b>State Growth</b></p>



# Appendix B – Implementation of the Tasmanian Carer Action Plan 2017-2020 – Status of Actions

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The first *Tasmanian Carer Action Plan 2017-2020* included 22 actions as highlighted in the table on the following page. Seven actions have been completed and the continuing actions are captured below.

## **Promote and celebrate carer's valuable contribution to our community.**

[Previous Actions: 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3]

This includes the peak body and other funding provided to CTAS and MHFFT; annual promotion of National Carers Week, hosting internal and external events; and identifying additional opportunities to publicise and acknowledge carers in our community. This will also include promoting the Carer Gateway in publications (such as Concession Guide and Seniors Card Directory) and through links from our websites.

## **Raise awareness of carers in our community to assist in the early identification and recognition of carers.**

[Previous Actions: 1.6, 1.7, 2.2 and 2.3]

This includes the current State Service Carer Toolkit and Flexible Work Policy; TasTAFE Student Carer Policy and DoE Student Re-Engagement policy. It will also include any outcomes from State Service Review and enhancements to the Flexible Work policies as a result of the COVID-19 experience.

## **Ensure carers can access easy-to-understand information, advice and support from our frontline services.**

[Previous Actions: 2.1, 2.4 and 2.5]

Feedback on problems or gaps in information will be encouraged through a dedicated Communities Tasmania carer email inbox. The annual Forum (see action 2.2) will also provide an opportunity for feedback on information and services.

## **Ensure carer issues are considered in a range of Government and Ministerial forums. Establish, maintain and support effective communication networks.**

[Previous Actions: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3. and 3.4]

The Carer Issues Reference Group (CIRG) will meet twice a year and will also participate in the annual Carer Forum. The Forum outcomes will be reported to Cabinet and discussed at CIRG, PDAC and Ministerial Disability Consultative Group (MDCG) meetings.

# Appendix B – Implementation of the Tasmanian Carer Action Plan 2017-2020 – Status of Actions

## Implementation of the Tasmanian Carer Action Plan 2017-2020 – Status of Actions

### Objective 1 – Increase the level of recognition of carers

Action (and responsible agency)	Status February 2021
<p>1.1 Support Carers Tasmania and MHCTas (now MHFFT) to raise community awareness of carers, including the valuable contribution they make and the challenges they face.</p> <p>Communities Tasmania and DoH<sup>15</sup></p>	<p>This action is ongoing and is captured in the Service Map.</p> <p>Peak body and other funding provided by Communities Tasmania (CTAS) and DoH (MHFFT).</p>
<p>1.2 Organise annual Department sponsored events during Carers Week to recognise employees who have caring responsibilities and celebrate carers in the community.</p> <p>Communities Tasmania and DoH</p>	<p>This action is ongoing and is captured in the Service Map.</p>
<p>1.3 Promote Carers Week on the DPAC [now Communities Tasmania] website and encourage other departments to also promote Carers Week.</p> <p>Communities Tasmania</p>	<p>This action is ongoing and is captured in the Service Map.</p> <p>See also actions 1.2 and 1.4.</p>
<p>1.4 Implement the DoE Attendance Policy and Process to help schools identify when caring responsibilities are the reason for a student's unexplained absence from school.</p> <p>DoE</p>	<p><b>COMPLETED</b></p> <p>DoE's Attendance Policy and Procedure was revised in 2017.</p>
<p>1.5 Review the definition of carer in the Carer Policy, in consultation with key agencies and community organisations, so all carers affected by the Carer Policy see themselves and their role in the definition.</p> <p>Communities Tasmania</p>	<p><b>COMPLETED</b></p> <p>New definition in use for 2021-2024 Action Plan.</p>
<p>1.6 As part of the Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Framework, monitor activities that promote awareness of caring responsibilities Tasmanian State Service employees and officers may have.</p> <p>DPAC</p>	<p>This action is ongoing and is captured in the Service Map.</p> <p>See also actions 2.3 and 2.4.</p>
<p>1.7 Work with frontline Government services that engage with carers to explore how they can embed awareness of carer needs, and how these differ across diverse groups of carers.</p> <p>Communities Tasmania</p>	<p>This action is ongoing and is captured in the Service Map.</p> <p>See also Action 1.3 (Forum).</p>

# Appendix B – Implementation of the Tasmanian Carer Action Plan 2017-2020 – Status of Actions

## Objective 2 – Improve the level of support and services to carers

Action (and responsible agency)	Status February 2021
<p>2.1 On an annual basis, continue to work with Carers Tasmania and other key carer support organisations to find ways to ensure carers know about available supports and services.</p> <p>Communities Tasmania and DoH</p>	<p>This action is ongoing and is captured in the Service Map.</p> <p>See also Action 1.3 (Forum).</p>
<p>2.2 Ensure Tasmanian State Service employees/officers with caring responsibilities and their colleagues have access to contemporary and relevant resources that support flexible workplaces.</p> <p>DPAC (SSMO)</p>	<p>This action is ongoing and is captured in the Service Map. See also Action 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5.</p> <p>Work had been undertaken on a draft TSS Workplace Flexibility Policy. The focus of this work during COVID-19 was on the development of a range of relevant resources to support employees with caring responsibilities (ie Information Guide – Employment Arrangements, Workforce Management and Leave during COVID-19), all of which support flexible workplaces.</p> <p>Workplace Flexibility also addressed in recent COVID Safe Workplaces in the TSS – A Framework for Transitioning to the New Normal (September 2020).</p> <p>Further work will be undertaken on reviewing Workplace Flexibility draft post-COVID-19.</p>
<p>2.3 Develop a Carers’ Toolkit for Tasmanian State Service employees, officers and managers that provides guidance about work arrangements and support.</p> <p>DPAC (SSMO)</p>	<p><b>COMPLETED</b></p> <p>State Service Management Office developed the Carers Toolkit – Supporting Carers in the State Service launched in Carers Week 2019.</p>
<p>2.4 Work with the Carer Issues Reference Group to identify gaps and avenues for better promotion of supports that are available to carers.</p> <p>Communities Tasmania / All members</p>	<p>This action is ongoing and is captured in the Service Map.</p> <p>See also Action 1.1 (Governance) Action 1.3 (Forum).</p>
<p>2.5 Continue to administer and expand the Companion Card program.</p> <p>Communities Tasmania</p>	<p>This action is ongoing and is captured in the Service Map.</p>



## Appendix B – Implementation of the Tasmanian Carer Action Plan 2017-2020 – Status of Actions

Action (and responsible agency)	Status February 2021
<p>2.6 Develop a Child and Student Wellbeing Strategy for release in 2018.</p> <p>DoE</p>	<p><b>COMPLETED</b></p> <p>The Child and Student Wellbeing Strategy was launched in 2018.</p> <p>Throughout 2020 DoE's focus has been supporting the wellbeing of all students, and especially vulnerable cohorts, during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
<p>2.7 Provide additional professional support staff (14.8 additional Full Time Equivalents over four years) to support the health, wellbeing and learning needs of Tasmanian students, including student carers. This includes \$6.9 million over four years for additional speech and language pathologists, school psychologists, and social workers in Tasmanian Government schools.</p> <p>DoE</p>	<p><b>COMPLETED</b></p> <p>The additional funded professional support staff were recruited as a result of the 2017-2018 State Budget.</p>
<p>2.8 Build and extend successful student re-engagement programs delivered by DoE. \$5 million is allocated over four years.</p> <p>DoE</p>	<p>This action is ongoing and is captured in the Service Map.</p>
<p>2.9 Seek advice from the Carer Issues Reference Group (CIRG) on how information that is timely, simple and free of jargon can reach carers. All CIRG members</p>	<p>This action is ongoing and is captured in the Service Map.</p> <p>See also Action 1.3 (Forum).</p>
<p>2.10 Through Tasmania's Active Ageing Plan 2017-2022 fund the Council on the Ageing Tasmania (COTA) to deliver initiatives to improve digital inclusion for older Tasmanians.</p> <p>Communities Tasmania</p>	<p><b>COMPLETED</b></p> <p>In 2017 COTA Tasmania received a Tasmanian Government Active Ageing grant to survey digital literacy programs and develop flyers that advertised programs in ten areas around Tasmania: <a href="http://www.cotatas.org.au/programs-events/liveable_communities/digital-programs-in-tasmania/">http://www.cotatas.org.au/programs-events/liveable_communities/digital-programs-in-tasmania/</a>.</p> <p>COTA also conducted a volunteer program to improve digital inclusion for older Tasmanians.</p>

## Appendix B – Implementation of the Tasmanian Carer Action Plan 2017-2020 – Status of Actions

Action (and responsible agency)	Status February 2021
<p>2.11 Continue to recognise carers as a target group within the Training and Work Pathways Program (TWPP), which aims to expand and sustain learning opportunities and employment options for disadvantaged Tasmanians.</p> <p>State Growth</p>	<p><b>COMPLETED</b></p> <p>Carers Tasmania's <b>Care to Work</b> project was funded through the 2018-19 TWPP. This was based on a program that had run in the Northern Territory. It supported ten Tasmanian carers to access education and training that recognised existing knowledge and skills, to provide a supported pathway to help resolve present skills shortages in the disability and aged care sectors. Of these participants, seven gained a Certificate III in Individual Support and three gained a Statement of Attainment.</p> <p>People with caring responsibilities were also an eligible target group under the 2020 TWPP.</p> <p>Carers who have lost their job or who wish to undertake vocational education and training may be eligible for subsidised training through Skills Tasmania's funding programs.</p>

## Appendix B – Implementation of the Tasmanian Carer Action Plan 2017-2020 – Status of Actions

### Objective 3 – Involve carers in the development and evaluation of policies, programs of services that affect them and their caring role

Action (and responsible agency)	Status February 2021
<p>3.1 Continue to fund and work with community sector organisations to build carer capacity and opportunities for carers to engage with government (departments and Ministers/MPs). Communities Tasmania and DoH</p>	<p>This action is ongoing and is captured in the Service Map. See also Action 1.3 (Forum).</p>
<p>3.2 Coordinate the Carer Issues Reference Group (CIRG) to ensure that the Tasmanian and Australian Governments, and key carer support and advocacy bodies, can share information and respond collaboratively to key issues affecting Tasmanian carers. Communities Tasmania</p>	<p>This action is ongoing and is captured in the Service Map. CIRG has met six times – August 2017; June 2018; March 2019; November 2019; August 2020 and February 2021.</p>
<p>3.3 Audit how government engages with carers, to identify opportunities to better promote the accessibility of existing engagement mechanisms, and highlight areas that require more engagement. Communities Tasmania / All agencies</p>	<p>This action is ongoing and is captured in the Service Map. See also Action 1.3 (Forum).</p>
<p>3.4 Coordinate the Premier’s Disability Advisory Council (PDAC) and the Ministerial Disability Advisory Council (MDAC) with ongoing membership from carer representatives. Communities Tasmania (CSR and Housing, Disability and Community Services)</p>	<p>This action is ongoing and is captured in the Service Map. See also Action 1.3 (Forum). PDAC meets twice a year with Premier as Chair and the Minister for Disability Services and Community Development also attending. MDAC’s final meeting was in June 2020. It was replaced by the MDCCG which met for the first time in December 2020. The MDCCG provides an opportunity for the Minister for Disability Services and Community Development to consult with, and be advised by, a broad range of stakeholders in relation to Tasmanian and national disability services related policy and program matters and the experience of people with disability, their carers and families in Tasmania.</p>



## References

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1. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2018). *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia*.
2. Caring Fairly (2020). *COVID-19 Carer Survey*.
3. Carers NSW (2020). *National Carer Survey*.
4. Carers Tasmania (2020). *Road to Recovery – COVID-19 Survey*.
5. Deloitte Access Economics (2020). *The Value of informal care in 2020*. Carers Australia.
6. Mental Health Carers Australia (2020). *Survey on Impacts of COVID-19 on Families and Carers of NDIS Participants with Psychosocial Disability*.
7. Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council *Interim Report July 2020*
8. Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council *Final Report March 2020*

## Endnotes

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- 1 Note: unpaid carers includes people who receive the Australian Government Carer Payment or Carer Allowance. The Carer Allowance is an income supplement of \$131.90 per fortnight. Carer Payment is income and assets tested and paid at the same rate as other social security pensions.
- 2 The Carer Gateway commenced operation in April 2020.
- 3 I-Care – A Resource for Family and Friends Supporting Someone in Hospital (2019) I-Care-Book-2019.pdf (carerstas.org)
- 4 The 2016 definition was based on the Queensland *Carers (Recognition) Act 2008*.
- 5 ABS (2018) Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Tasmania, 2018 Data Cube 44300do006.
- 6 Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings methodology, 2018 | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)
- 7 Young carers are aged 15-24 years. <https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/2018#appendix-carers>
- 8 Deloitte Access Economics (2020) The Value of Informal Care in 2020.
- 9 ABS (2018) Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, Key Statistics, Carers.
- 10 Muir, G., Beasley, A., Shackleton, F., Davis, E., Armstrong, K., Hayes, L., (2020) Caring during Coronavirus: Results of the COVID-19 Carer Survey, Caring Fairly, Melbourne.
- 11 Carers NSW (2020), National Carer Study, Summary Report.
- 12 Carer Gateway – Carers can access support and information by calling 1800 422 737 or by visiting the website at [www.carergateway.gov.au](http://www.carergateway.gov.au).
- 13 Carers can visit [www.servicesaustralia.gov.au](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au) or call 13 27 17 to find out more information regarding their eligibility.
- 14 DSS Payment Demographic Data – (Published Quarterly). This represents just under one-third of the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018 estimate of 80 100 carers in Tasmania. ABS data shows just under half (46%) of carers reported were employed either full-time or part time in 2018.
- 15 Communities Tasmania commenced in July 2018 – actions previously allocated to the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) were reallocated resulting in some ‘shared’ actions.

## Photo credits

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