

## ACT CARERS' CHARTER

### What is the ACT Carers' Charter?

The ACT Carers' Charter provides a policy framework to guide the way government and community services meet the needs of carers in the ACT.

The Charter will raise awareness of the situation of members of our community who have a caring role and may experience disadvantage. The Charter also has an educational function, raising community awareness of carers in order to reduce any systemic barriers faced.

### Why introduce a Carers' Charter in the ACT?

Carers make a substantial contribution to the economic and social welfare of our community. The Charter outlines what carers should expect from ACT Government and community organisations that provide support to carers in the ACT.

Formal recognition of carers has been provided under policy and legislation in the ACT. The Charter provides a platform for improving the experience of carers by recognising that while carers needs are diverse, all carers should expect to be treated with dignity and respect.

### Who is the Charter for?

Carers, people receiving care, families, service providers and Government.

### Who is a Carer?

According to the 2009 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers there are 34 900 carers in the ACT which is approximately 10% of the total population (ABS). However, this is likely to under-represent the actual number of carers in the ACT as it includes only carers who have been or expect to be in the caring role for six months or more and does not incorporate the broader definition of carer which is used in the ACT Carers' Charter.

In the ACT, the term 'carer' encompasses a diversity of individuals performing a caring role. The Charter defines a carer as "a person who provides unpaid care to someone else who is dependent on the person for ongoing care and assistance".

This definition includes people who provide informal care and support to friends and relatives with needs associated with disability, ageing, ongoing physical or mental illness, or substance misuse, as well as grandparents, kinship carers or foster carers who provide a caring role to children and young people. Carers in the ACT provide vital support to people who need assistance with physical care, including dressing, lifting, showering, preparing meals, shopping, and providing transport, and emotional support, security and love.

## What are the principles of the Charter?

1. Carers are engaged in matters that affect them as carers.
2. Carers are valued and treated with respect and dignity.
3. Carers are supported to sustain their caring role.
4. Carers' diverse needs are acknowledged and appropriate supports provided.
5. Carers share a quality of life that is in accordance with community standards.

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