



**2007/08 REPORT OF COMPLIANCE AND ACTIVITY**

**BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WITH THE**

***CARERS RECOGNITION ACT 2005***

***PREPARED BY***

***THE OFFICE FOR CARERS***

## CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	3
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	5
<b>KEY ACTIVITIES SUMMARY</b> .....	7
<b>Department for Families and Communities</b> .....	7
<b>Department of Health</b> .....	11
<b>Department of Education and Children’s Services (DECS)</b> .....	14
<b>Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST)</b> .....	15
<b>Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI)</b> .....	16
<b>Justice Portfolio ( including SAPOL)</b> .....	16
<b>Primary Industries and Resources SA (PIRSA)</b> .....	16
<b>Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC)</b> .....	17
<b>FINDINGS</b> .....	18
<b>DISCUSSION</b> .....	21
<b>DIRECTIONS FOR 2009/10</b> .....	23
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	25

### APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Reporting template 2007/2008

Appendix 2: Department for Families and Communities (DFC)

Appendix 3: Department of Health (DH)

Appendix 4: Department of Education and Children’s Services (DECS)

Appendix 5: Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology  
(DFEEST)

Appendix 6: The Justice Portfolio (including South Australian Police SAPOL)

Appendix 7: Primary Industries and Resources SA (PIRSA)

Appendix 8: Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report considers those reports provided by South Australian state government departments for the period 2007/08 in relation to compliance with the *SA Carers Recognition Act 2005*. Consideration is also given to the process and format of reporting which was requested. This Report reflects progress achieved across government in the two years since the Act was passed in late 2005.

Recognition of carers is a relatively young topic; there is significant variability across reporting Departments in the business connectivity with carers and Departments' familiarity and awareness of carer issues. There is much to be done to ensure that the Carers Recognition Act and the associated Carers Charter have consistent practical application by SA Government Departments to the lives of South Australian carers.

This Report considers initiatives and progress achieved and also considers areas which can assist in both raising awareness and ultimately improve experiences of carers in support and services received. Recommended directions are discussed in the body of this document.

Highlights of the 2007/08 reporting include:

- The Mental Health Bill 2008 recognises the role of carers and supports the appropriate sharing of information in the interests of the patient. Young carers have been included in the Bill.
- Health SA strategic planning reports the consideration of the role and needs of carers in all aspects of planning.
- A major SA research study entitled "The Health and Wellbeing of Adult Family Carers in South Australia - an Epidemiological Analysis, 1994-2004" was released by the South Australian Health Research Unit in February 2008.
- Research on carer health and wellbeing was included in the 2008 Autumn SA Health Omnibus Survey.
- Department for Families and Communities, through Office for Carers, offered information workshops to more than 168 Home and Community Care (HACC) funded agencies regarding the Carers Recognition Act and associated responsibilities.

- Office for the Ageing (OFTA) in DFC consulted with carers within the HACC target group and within CALD communities about services required to support them in their caring role. This has resulted in funding allocations to increase services and service responsiveness for carers where geographic gaps in carer support services existed or there was lack of funding for specific communities.
- Disability SA launched the Companion Card which enables the disabled person and a companion (carer) to attend a range of activities / settings for the cost of one person.
- The Department for Education and Children's Services reports requirements to enable young carers to progress their education through sensitive management of their individual school curriculum and timetabling. Dependant on the age of the student, part time schooling, alternative programs, Open Access, after hours tutoring, mentoring or curriculum selection can occur.

The following directions are identified and are discussed in the body of the Report:

- There is a need for improved engagement across Departments
- There is scope for Departments to collaborate in raising awareness of carers and in achieving outcomes for carers as customers and employees.
- Strengthening partnerships with carers and recognising their capacity to inform in improvement of service responses to carers.
- Research findings to inform practice in responding to carers.
- Raising awareness of carers with non government organisations toward increasing non government organisations' knowledge of carer issues and their responsiveness to carers.
- Compliance with reporting is variable. The promotion of a more systematic approach to ensure the objectives of the Carers Recognition Act and the Carers Charter are embedded as a component of business planning. Reporting which requires verification of compliance and is focussed on outcomes to achieve continuous quality improvement.
- Engage with a broader range of government departments to increase the focus on carers as employees.

## INTRODUCTION

**The SA Carers Recognition Act 2005, (Act) was enacted to recognise the contribution of carers to the community, and to ensure government departments were aware of and responsive to carers needs. The Carers Charter is enshrined within the Act.**

**The Act requires relevant departments to report on actions taken to reflect the requirements of the Act and the Principles of the Carers Charter in the provision of services relevant to carers and the persons they care for.**

### **Carers**

It is estimated that one in eight South Australians provide care and that numbers of carers in the general population will increase as the general population ages (ABS 2005). Numbers of older people estimated to require care will however increase at a significantly higher rate (Percival, Kelly 2004). This is an issue of increased importance in South Australia because it is also a state with one of the highest proportions of ageing people. (ABS 2008)

Federal and State governments are aware of the heavy physical, emotional, social and financial cost for individual carers. The current social, economic and service delivery contexts also bear pressure on the carer.

The *SA Carers Recognition Act 2005* provides a legislated framework for SA Government Departments and government funded agencies to consider the way they provide services to carers, and how they promote and recognise the contribution made by carers. The Act requires carers are acknowledged as partners in the provision of care.

The Department for Families and Communities (DFC) is the lead agency for implementation and monitoring of progress of the legislation. The Office for Carers (OFC), established in October 2006, has primary responsibility to administer the legislation and to work alongside government departments in the implementation of the Act. 2007/08 marked the second formal reporting period as required by the Act.

The reporting framework for this period built on the learning from the reporting of 2006/07 and was developed in collaboration with those government departments required by the legislation to comply.

For the purposes of the *SA Carers Recognition Act 2005* applicable government departments are those deemed to provide relevant services to carers, and which are required to report their actions to reflect the requirements of the *SA Carers Recognition Act 2005*.

Applicable government departments are as follows:

- Department for Families and Communities (DFC)
- Department of Health (DH)
- Department for Education and Children's Services (DECS)
- Department for Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST)
- Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI)
- The Justice Portfolio (including South Australia Police [SAPOL])

These Departments are represented on the Whole of Government Carers Implementation Group. The role and purpose of this Group is to identify and implement strategies to meet the requirements of the *Act* in the context of their agencies.

In addition, the Department for Premier and Cabinet (DPC), the Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH), Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) Primary Industries and Resources South Australia (PIRSA) and Department of Treasury and Finance are represented on the group, attesting to their commitment to recognise and support carers.

## **KEY ACTIVITIES SUMMARY**

Each organisational division was requested to submit reporting data to the Office for Carers (OFC) outlining activities undertaken during the reporting period. The complete reports are included in Appendix One.

A summary is provided below of all reports forwarded to the Department for Families and Communities by these agencies, including that of DFC. Consideration is given to each Principle where this detail has been provided.

### **Department for Families and Communities**

The Office for Carers (OFC) was established in 2006 to take the lead to implement and monitor progress of the *SA Carers Recognition Act 2005* and to act as a voice for carers within the Government of South Australia.

DFC through OFC provides leadership in responding to carer issues and monitoring the Act through a committee framework which supports the implementation of the Carers Recognition Act at different levels across Government:

- The Whole of Government Implementation Group comprises representation across government. It oversees the implementation and reporting processes across government and identifies issues related to implementation, including achievements, opportunities and barriers.
  
- DFC Carers Group consists of representatives from divisions and units within DFC. This group meet quarterly to implement the Act within DFC for both carers who are customers and departmental employees. Divisions represented include:
  - The Office for The Ageing (OFTA)
  - Domiciliary Care SA
  - Office for Carers (OFC)
  - Office for Volunteers
  - Housing SA
  - Disability SA
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services
  - Community Connect
  - Organisational Development

- The SA Carers Reference Group consists of carer representatives who have extensive experience in relation to carers, carer organisations and key government departments including Commonwealth representation (Centrelink).

This group provide advice on carer issues and on the implementation of the Carers Policy, the Carers Charter and the Carers Recognition Act

There was a continued focus on provision of information to raise awareness about carers and the issues they face both within DFC and across Government through out 2007/2008. Divisions of DFC engaged in a range of activities to produce and disseminate information relating to carers:

- The Office for Carers newsletter provides information for carers, government and non-government and organisations, links and contacts, and updates on projects relevant to carers.
- Articles are included in Housing Service news letters
- More than 3000 Supporting Carers folders were distributed which includes the Act, the Carers Charter, SA Carers Policy and other promotional material
- The Office for Disability and Client Services (ODACS) publication *Disability Matters* contains information on support systems and resources available to carers of people with a disability

### **Principle 1 – Carers have choices within their caring role.**

- The information resource “Grandparents Raising Grandchildren” was developed for relative caregivers. A second print of the resource demonstrates the need for information and providing choice.
- Community Connect developed fact sheets which support carers:
  - Carers Information Fact Sheet,
  - Carers (Community Organisations) Information Fact Sheet
- Agencies applying for grant funding through Community Connect undertake an External Assessment. As part of that assessment the applicants policies and procedures in relation to carers are considered
- Carer issues are integrated within DFC Human Resource (HR) sessions to ensure that managers are aware of workforce diversity needs

- DFC HR developed a Bill of Rights which is available on the Departmental Intranet. This will be widely promoted in the future.
- The concept of a Leave Bank which carers can draw on when needed for caregiving responsibilities is being considered.

### **Principle 2 - Carers Health and Wellbeing are critical to the community**

- OFC widely disseminated findings from national and state research specific to carer health and wellbeing. The implications of the research were considered at a Government and Reference Group level, thereby providing research which can inform policy directions.

### **Principle 3 –Carers play a critical role in maintaining the fabric of society**

- DFC Staff Survey included questions specifically related to carers. This is the first step in estimating carer numbers within the Department and determining the issues for action to assist employees with their dual responsibilities.
- DFC employees who are carers were also the focus for Carers Week 2007, with the DFC Chief Executive (CE) hosting a range of events for working carers within the Department. The CE also hosted a blog specifically to encourage the promulgation of ideas to support its employees who are carers.

### **Principle 4 – Service Providers work in partnership with carers**

- Statewide consultations with carers and carer support agencies were conducted by OFC. The information and learning have been used to provide the framework of the *Strategic Plan for South Australian Carers 2009 - 2012*.
- Housing SA developed a Housing Customer Participation Strategy to strengthen participation in planning, policy development, and service delivery. They developed a wide range of consultation and feedback mechanisms and will invite organisations representing carers to register.
- Disability SA undertook a Service Co-ordination Review. Feedback from consumers and carers will inform the development of future plans for Disability SA
- Community Connect have developed clauses within service agreements to ensure there are contractual expectations of consultations with carers or representatives with carers to inform their strategic and operational planning where relevant for carers.

**Principle 5- Carers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities need specific consideration.**

- DFC is the lead State Government agency in an Australian Research Council research study on grandparents as primary carers of their grandchildren, which has a particular focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander grandparents.
- OFTA have applied for \$75,000 in the current HACC Funding Round to initiate an Aboriginal carers and grandparents needs analysis in 2009. This will provide the basis for specific funding allocations for Aboriginal carers within the HACC target group.

**Principle 6- All children and young people have the right to enjoy life and reach their potential**

- DFC is a lead SA government department in an Australian Research Council funded three year research study into the issues for young carers undertaken by University of NSW. This research is now in its second year.

**Principle 7- Resources are available to provide timely, appropriate and adequate assistance to carers**

- In order to progress the agenda for carers a statewide Strategic Plan is being developed by OFC. The Plan will focus on departments working together to establish an equitable, planned and co-ordinated response for carers.
- OFTA continued to identify opportunities to improve existing carer services and develop new ones, tendering a number of consultancies.

In response to the findings HACC allocations has been made for:

- \$650,000 recurrent funding to respond to identified gaps in services (Adelaide Hills, Strathalbyn/Mt Compass, Kangaroo Island, and outer metropolitan areas)
- \$90,000 one-off funding allocated to support CALD communities in developing carer services
- Disability SA launched the Companion Card (CC) in December 2007. People with significant disabilities (880) and their companions have accessed this opportunity to be able to attend a range of activities/ settings for the cost of one person.

- One-off grants funding through Community Benefit SA is available to assist disadvantaged people in the community: direct service provider agencies are encouraged to apply in areas that target young carers.

## **SA Health**

The SA Health Report is a consolidated report which includes responses from the Department of Health, Health Regions and Health Units.

A major focus and priority for SA Health in 2007 – 2008 has been the reform of the public health system and the change in governance with the Health Care Act 2008 to come into effect on 1 July 2008. The aim of these changes is to create a single, unified public health system with improved state-wide coordination and integration of services. The anticipated result will be in long term benefits for all those who use or work in the health system, including carers.

The Department of Health, Health Regions and Health Units use the SA Carers Policy and the SA Carers Charter to inform program and policy development and operational planning. The role and needs of carers is considered in all aspects of program and service planning and this includes consultation with carers/carers groups.

The Department of Health performance agreements with health regions and health units require them to implement the Carers Policy and provide annual progress reports on implementation to the Department of Health each year.

The Mental Health Bill 2008, which was introduced into Parliament for debate in June 2008, provides a contemporary framework for the provision of services to people with serious mental illness who are either unwilling or unable to consent to their own treatment. The Bill recognises the role of carers and supports the appropriate sharing of information in the interests of the patient, subject to certain restrictions.

### **Principle 1 – Carers have choices within their caring role.**

Health Regions and Health Units:

- provide information sessions for staff about the Carers Recognition Act, the Carers Policy and the Carers Charter.
- conduct consultations with carers and carer groups, including Aboriginal carers and young carers.
- mental health services provide support and information to carers as a standard component of assessment and treatment for clients.

SA Health has policies and procedures in place for voluntary flexible work practices. Training is available for Managers and HR personnel to ensure they are able to provide appropriate support and assistance to staff who are carers.

### **Principle 2 - Carers Health and Wellbeing are critical to the community**

The SA Health and Research Unit released the research study, “The Health and Wellbeing of Adult Family Carers in South Australia- an Epidemiological Analysis, 1994-2004” which identifies and considers the health status of SA carers.

The 2008 Autumn Omnibus Survey included questions on carer issues including the impact of caring on carer health and wellbeing.

### **Principle 4 – Service Providers work in partnership with carers**

Carers and/or carers’ advocates are consulted and appointed to relevant advisory bodies/committees/forums.

SA Health considers the role and needs of carers in all aspects of planning and advice is sought from peak bodies when required.

Examples include:

- carer advocates and representatives are included in the Clinical Service Reform agenda through consultation processes and inclusion on clinical networks.
- The Repatriation General Hospital involves carers through the Consumer Council, Hospital Quality Group, and Future Directions Committee
- All country hospitals and health units have policies and programs to involve carers in health arrangements that affect them
- Adult Mental Health Service staff have developed the “Working with Carers as Partners” program

### **Principle 5- Carers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities need specific consideration.**

Service planning and service provision across SA Health includes consideration of the particular needs of Aboriginal carers. The Aboriginal Health Division of the Department of Health and the Aboriginal Health Council of SA are consulted on key policies and strategies to ensure consideration is given to the particular needs of Aboriginal carers.

**Principle 6- All children and young people have the right to enjoy life and reach their potential**

Young carers have been included in the definition of carer in the Mental Health Bill 2008 and in the development of Treatment and Care Plans which provides for the involvement of family/carers including children who are carers.

Health Regions and Health Units have processes in place to identify and support young carers. Referrals are made to carer support agencies and in particular young carer support groups.

## **Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS)**

DECS are in a primary position to identify and connect with young carers in order to enable support for them. 2007-2008 is the first reporting year for DECS because their business reports to a calendar year.

### **Principle 1 – Carers have choices within their caring role.**

- DECS has developed a number of strategies to support the needs of carers as employees through flexible working arrangements. Their November Gender Equity consultation is expected to provide specific suggestions from employees who are carers.
- DECS have undertaken a range of strategies to ensure that there is increased awareness about the needs of carers. This has been relevant for both employees who are carers, and young people who may be carers. This has included:
  - Electronic advice from the CE to all DECS sites to promote the Carers Recognition Act and Carers Week
  - An awareness campaign on family friendly and flexible working conditions titled "Finding The Balance" with a specific section targeting carer needs

### **Principle 2 - Carers Health and Wellbeing are critical to the community**

- A focus on young carers educational requirements which enables young carers to progress their education through sensitive management of their individual school curriculum and timetabling.
  - Dependant on the age of the student, part time schooling/ alternative programs/ Open Access/ after hours tutoring/mentoring/ curriculum selection can occur
- A Statewide Gender Equity consultation seeks specific information from employees who are carers about how they can be better supported

### **Principle 4 – Service Providers work in partnership with carers**

- Young carers are encouraged to give feedback through a range of approaches: Student Representative Council, Student Counsellors, Pastoral Care system, and the District Student Inclusion and Wellbeing teams

**Principle 7- Resources are available to provide timely, appropriate and adequate assistance to carers**

- Raising awareness of carer issues with school staff has enabled identification of young carers and the provision of support and linking with other agencies and providers in the community
- “Grandparents Raising Grandchildren” information resource has been disseminated

**Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST)**

- 2007-2008 is the first reporting year for DFEEST because their business reports to a calendar year

**Principle 1 – Carers have choices within their caring role.**

The DFEEST Workforce Development Platform 2010 identifies and supports the needs of carers with voluntary flexible working arrangements including compressed hours, flexitime and working from home. Line managers are encouraged to support carers at a unit level.

- TAFE Access and Equity Committees monitor, report and recommend actions to assist with issues impacting on carers. A co-ordinated approach is being developed to assess the adequacy of related policies, the appropriateness of communication strategies and the effectiveness of reporting.
- Flexible work arrangements support the balancing of employee/ carer roles

**Principle 4 – Service Providers work in partnership with carers**

- Existing consultation strategies currently provide avenues of interaction with the need identified for a more formalised approach

**Principle 5- Carers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities need specific consideration.**

- Initial consultation has been undertaken to identify policies and practices and it is intended to further this work in 2008

## **Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI)**

DTEI reporting against the Carers Recognition Act was unable to be tabled in Parliament in time to enable inclusion of their data in this Report.

## **Justice Portfolio ( including SAPOL).**

A report was received only from SAPOL for consideration in this Report.

### **Principle 1 – Carers have choices within their caring role.**

- SAPOL employees have access to the Carers Recognition Act through the SAPOL Intranet Homepage, Equity and Diversity Section
- Disability and Awareness Training contains a component on the Carers Recognition Act. The training is compulsory and has been undertaken throughout SAPOL
- SAPOL has a number of flexible working arrangements designed to assist employees including those who are also carers to achieve balance between their work and caring role.

## **Primary Industries and Resources SA (PIRSA)**

Although not mandated to report against the Act PIRSA submitted for the second year a report detailing its current status and relevance for carers.

- PIRSA is considering conducting a staff climate survey in relation to the full range of human resource management areas in the future which may include carer issues.
- Employees are provided with electronic information about carer issues and flexible work arrangements.
- Flexible work arrangements are available to employees as a matter of course and carers are able to avail themselves of them.
- In relation to promoting and seeking representation and appointment of carers to advisory bodies and committees generally, PIRSA are currently developing a Boards and Committees Policy.
- Carer issues will be considered for possible inclusion in existing cross cultural training programs and at present does feature in People with Disabilities Awareness materials. Specific needs and access for carers to training and development will also be considered.
- Research for an intranet of resources is presently being conducted.

## **Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC)**

Although not mandated to report against the Act DPC submitted its first report detailing its current status and relevance for carers.

### **Principle 1 – Carers have choices within their caring role.**

DPC introduced a number of initiatives which had been introduced by DFC for its employees. The DPC Disability Action Plan and Access Policy were amended to include reference to carers and senior management were asked to promote the amendments. DPC increased the amount of carers leave from 10 to 20 days and developed a process to access details on useage of carer leave and report on the results. A fact sheet detailing leave entitlements and flexible work arrangement options has been developed.

### **Principle 2 - Carers Health and Wellbeing are critical to the community**

DPC made a submission to OFC in relation to the Federal Inquiry by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth Inquiry into Better Support for Carers.

## **FINDINGS**

This report reflects the second year of reporting to the Minister for Families and Communities.

The range and quality of reporting responses received was variable.

Timeliness of receipt of Departmental compliance with the Act was also variable. OFC extended the timeframes to assist. Not all Departments activities have been provided to be able to be included in this Report.

DEH, DTF, PIRSA and DPC are to be congratulated on their voluntary attendance in relation to whole of government considerations of carers; the latter two Departments for their initiative in providing reports for the period 2007/08 in response to the Act.

Most reporting departments continued for this reporting year to focus on raising awareness of the Act and of carers, disseminating information pertinent to carers broadly.

DECS disseminated Circulars regarding the Act from their Chief Executive Officer; Department of Health conducted information sessions with staff and awareness training with Managers; a quarterly Newsletter was produced and disseminated broadly by Office for Carers within DFC.

Most Departments reported activities to increase the level of awareness of 'carers as employees'. Departments reported a range of flexible work arrangements and provision of workshops for line managers to support employees who are carers. In some instances however this appeared to reflect raising employee awareness of currently existing flexible work arrangements without particular focus on carers.

There has been increased reporting of carer consultation processes for the Department of Health, DECS, DFC and DFEEST, and a growth and improvement in strategies which recognise and involve carers.

Reporting included: The Department of Health consultation with carers and carer groups including Aboriginal carers and young carers; the Office for Carers statewide consultation with carers and carer groups, and DECS statewide Gender Equity consultation with a specific section seeking suggestions on how they can support employees who are carers.

The Department of Health (including Mental Health), DECS, and Disability SA (DFC) reported they have commenced development of consultation processes within specific projects in relation to carers.

A number of departments indicated they have conducted consultations where carers were one of the target groups, however limited evidence is provided of consultation with carers specifically or of developing partnerships with carers. A number of responses were vague and indicated that traditional activities or consultations included or would include carers in the future.

Responses to the needs of Aboriginal carers (Principle 5) were limited in most instances, or referred to as a component of broader consultations. This Principle was typically not well responded to.

Research initiatives have been undertaken within the ambit of the Department of Health which provide increased understanding of the physical, emotional, financial and social issues experienced by carers<sup>1</sup>. The research provides a baseline which is now available to inform the departmental infrastructure, programs and responses.

In their first year of reporting against the Carers Recognition Act DECS report they have taken significant steps in providing young carers with flexible learning activities which will them to remain within the educational system.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Health and Wellbeing of Adult Family Carers in South Australia – An epidemiological analysis 1994 – 2004*, Population Research and Outcome Studies <sup>1</sup> Gill, T., Jury, H., Avery, J., Warmington, R., Stacey, A., Taylor, A., *The Health and Wellbeing of Adult Family Carers* Research Unit, South Australian Department of Health, February 2008.

DFC Disability SA reported on the development of their reporting infrastructure which provides a process to coordinate and promote activity, and to facilitate data collection in relation to carers. Units therefore contribute throughout the year to the final report. It is difficult to ascertain to what degree other Departments have approached compliance in the same structured manner.

There has been a focus on activities undertaken to respond to carers but no commentary regarding the outcomes for carers or how activities affect a longer term process of improvement regarding quality and effectiveness of the specific activities undertaken. Complying organisations need to develop strategies to assess the impact of their changes on carers. The 2007/08 reporting template did not specifically request this data.

The reporting process has not required evidence of the changes undertaken by Departments. Consequently many responses are generalised, reducing understanding of specific activities in relation to carers which has been undertaken.

All Departments have referred to future strategies they have planned: an indicator of their recognition that compliance with the Act is an ongoing process.

## **DISCUSSION**

The second year of reporting compliance with the Act demonstrates a significant level of increased awareness and involvement by most of the Departments required to report. These Departments show an increased awareness of the Carers Recognition Act and the Carers Charter, and the necessary requirements for complying with the Act.

The Reporting template for 2007/08 comprised two sections:

- A) reporting in relation to carers who are consumers
- B) reporting in relation to carers who are employees

Not all Departments recognise that they have carers as customers (Part A) however Part B has obvious relevance to all government departments.

There is an increasing level of awareness of the issues for employees who are carers and of their colleagues who are carers. Government employees are also members of communities. Awareness and attitudinal change raised within departments will ultimately facilitate broader community awareness and understanding of the issues for carers.

The Act requires applicable state government departments to report their compliance or non-compliance with Section 6 of the Act and that this report “be incorporated with the annual report of the reporting organisation”. Organisations are obliged to take all practicable measures to:

- Ensure its officers, employees or agents have an awareness and understanding of the SA Carers Charter.
- Take action to reflect the principles of the Charter in the provision of the relevant services (of that organisation).
- Consult with carers and organisations that represent carers.

The legislation is not however instructive in how a compliance outcome is to be determined and the expected level of performance in relation to a determination of compliance.

Western Australian Carer Recognition legislation reporting<sup>2</sup> refers similarly to this issue.

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<sup>2</sup> “Carer Recognition – Building tomorrow’s partnerships today” Carers Advisory Council, Department for Communities, Government of Western Australia, March 2008

This Report provides opportunity for limited comparison with the first year of compliance reporting against the Carers Recognition Act. The first reporting template allowed for broadly based responses and was primarily used as a tool to raise awareness and encourage responsiveness to the new Act. In the first year of reporting Departments were asked for their future planning in relation to carers. This question was not included for the second year of reporting.

Comparisons over a two year time span are therefore not able to identify specific areas for comparison; comment only can be made on general theme areas for increased focus.

It is possible to identify the need for a more integrated approach to the topic of carers across government departments. Reports from individual Departments would be enhanced by ensuring the inclusion of all units or divisions of the reporting Departments, and to ensure carer focus is included in business planning. Focus on improved outcomes for carers and collection of information depicting the associated activities occurs over the entire year and requires all contributions and directions are encapsulated.

## DIRECTIONS FOR 2009/10

1. Currently Departments meet quarterly as a whole of government group with additional contact with OFC on an 'as needed' basis. A more engaged process between OFC and the Departments required, or electing, to comply with the Act would result in more consistent responses and enable Departments to share strategies in responding to carer needs.
2. The range of awareness raising strategies undertaken is an important first step to recognising and supporting carers within the community and within government departments. Processes varied between departments in relation to strategies and level of intensity. This could suggest opportunities for departments to take advantage of each others experiences with a united approach could bring together the best elements of all awareness raising strategies, including HR policies and processes.
3. In relation to legislated requirements to include carers in policy or program development, strategic or operational planning (Schedule 6:2 of the Act) there has been minimal evidence of carer participation on decision making boards, panels and committees. It is unclear to what degree strategic and operational plans reflect the involvement of carers & their representatives.

Carers can make a significant contribution in the development of policies and improved service responses for carers themselves, those they care for and the organisation. Views and needs of carers need to be taken into account to develop improved services, better outcomes for clients and carers. It would be useful for departments to consider and report on outcomes of carer feedback in quality management evaluation.

These processes which seek carers' participation validates and acknowledges carers' knowledge, skills and experience as a relevant resource to improve outcomes for clients. Carers otherwise remain an underutilised resource for improving service responses.

4. The Department of Health's *Health and Wellbeing Research of Adult Family Carers* has provided a solid basis for the Department of Health to initiate policies and

processes which address the health inequities between carers and non carers. Opportunities to share this research provide a stimulus for creating more responsive services across government. The nature of caring often results in frequent interaction with the health system. These interactions provide opportunity to respond to carer issues and to improve outcomes for carers and the health system overall.

5. DFC requires the non government organisations which it funds to be aware of the Act and to comply with the legislation as indicated in Service Agreements. These organisations were surveyed (2006-2007) in relation to their awareness of the Act and its requirements, and activities they undertook in relation to carers.

It would be valuable to engage with these organisations to increase their awareness and their responsiveness to the needs of carers. Many work directly with carers and care recipients. Other Departments providing funding to non government organisations would be similarly placed and could benefit from work undertaken by DFC.

6. At the conclusion of the second reporting period it will now be important to consider strategies within the reporting schedule to enable performance measures and comparisons within a framework of planned and continued improvement. Gaps in reporting were evident for all areas legislatively required. An infrastructure within departments to support the reporting process and enable the capturing of operational and infrastructure responses at all levels is required. Departmental reporting of quality and consistency could be assisted with OFC gaining familiarity with the structures and functions of reporting departments and with the relationship of carers to specific business areas.

7. Attendance of Departments similarly placed to DEH, PIRSA and DPC (as Departments not named as reporting organisations) would provide an increasing government focus on carers and would assist in the understanding of the work of other departments in relation to carers.

All areas of government have the propensity to have employees as carers and it would be appropriate to consider awareness raising activities with those areas which may not be currently engaged. There is strength in consideration of HR responses for carers from a whole of government perspective.

## REFERENCES

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- Percival, R & Kelly, S, 2004, ' , Report Prepared for Carers Australia by the National Centre *Who's going to Care, Informal Care and an Ageing Population* for Social and Economic Modelling, University of Canberra, ACT.
- The Health and Wellbeing of Adult Family Carers in South Australia- an Epidemiological Analysis, 1994-2004 , *Population Research and Outcome Studies*: Gill, T., Jury, H., Avery, J., Warmington, R., Stacey, A., Taylor, A., *The Health and Wellbeing of Adult Family Carers Research Unit*, South Australian Department of Health, February 2008.
- "Carer Recognition – Building tomorrow's partnerships today" Carers Advisory Council, Department for Communities, Government of Western Australia, March 2008

## APPENDIX 1

### **SA Carers Recognition Act 2005: Reporting Proforma for 2007 / 2008**

The ***Carers Recognition Act 2005*** came into operation on 1 December 2005. The Department for Families and Communities (DFC) has the lead responsibility for the implementation of the Act.

**Carers are defined**, for the purposes of this Legislation, as:  
the family and friends who provide ongoing care or assistance to someone who has a disability, or a chronic illness including a mental illness, or who is frail.

**A person is not a carer for the purposes of this legislation if:**  
the person provides the care or assistance under a contract for services in the course of doing community work or *only because* of the relationship of the person to whom the care or assistance is being provided. This Act does not encompass the care which is provided to a child under the Children's Protection Act 1993 or any other Act.

(For fuller detail refer to the Carers Recognition Act: website details below)

#### **Reporting Requirements**

The Act requires applicable state government departments to report their compliance with Section 6 of the Act. Organisations are to take all practicable measures to:

- Ensure its officers, employees or agents have an awareness and understanding of the SA Carers Charter
- Take action to reflect the principles of the Charter in the provision of the relevant services (of that organisation)
- Consult with carers and organisations that represent carers.

Further detail and the Carers Recognition Act, Carers Charter, and the SA Carers Policy are available on the DFC website:

<http://www.familiesandcommunities.sa.gov.au/default.aspx?tabid=994>

The completion of the template ensures all requirements to report against various sections of the Act, are met. It has been designed to measure continuous improvement in agencies.

Carers include our customers as well as employees who are also carers. The Reporting template comprises;

Section A: Reporting against the Carers Recognition Act for consumers/clients

Section B: Reporting against the Carers Recognition Act for employees who are carers.

Departments which do not provide services to consumers/clients will only complete Section B.

Applicable government departments<sup>3</sup> for the purposes of the Carers Recognition Act 2005 are those deemed to provide relevant services to carers, and are therefore required to report on action taken to reflect the requirements of the Carers Recognition Act 2005.

They are as follows:

- The Department for Families and Communities (DFC)
- The Department of Health (DoH)
- The Department for Education and Children’s Services (DECS)
- The Department for Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST)
- The Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI)
- The Justice Portfolio (including South Australia Police [SAPOL])

If you require further information please contact Suzie Taylor 8207 0424.

Name of Reporting Agency/ Department.....  
Telephone no.....  
Email.....

Name of person completing the survey.....  
Title.....  
Agency / Department.....

Please list all divisions included in this reporting

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
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<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of the *Carers Recognition Act 2005*, ‘applicable organisation’ means either a reporting organisation (a public service administrative unit within the meaning of the Public Sector Management Act 1995 that provides relevant services), a person or body providing relevant services under contract with a reporting organisation, or any other person or body declared by regulation to be an applicable organisation.

## Section A: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Consumers

### Consultations with Carers – on program or policy development; on strategic or operational planning

1. Does your agency have policies for ensuring carers who are consumers are included in policy and program development, and in strategic and operational planning where there is relevance to carers and the persons they support?

Yes	No	A process for development of policies
-----	----	---------------------------------------

**Provide evidence or relevant weblink**

**How are you monitoring and evaluating this?**

2. Does your agency have a mechanism to promote and seek representation and appointment of carers who are consumers or their advocates on advisory bodies / committees?

Yes	No	Some do	Majority have
-----	----	---------	---------------

**If yes, provide details of the mechanisms or attach examples**

3. Has your agency conducted surveys of carers who are consumers to identify their needs?

Yes	No	Investigating carer needs	In progress
-----	----	---------------------------	-------------

**Provide detail**

4. Will your agency be making changes to the way your services are delivered to carers as a result?

Yes	No	In progress	
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**If yes, please specify**

5. Does your agency have a written policy to inform planning and decision making between all parties in the caring relationship (service providers, carer/consumer, cared for person)?

Yes	No	Have commenced	
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**If yes, provide evidence**

6. Have you developed information and education strategies about the rights of carers who are consumers?

Yes	No	In progress	Some services do
-----	----	-------------	------------------

**If yes, provide evidence or relevant weblink**

**If yes, how has this information been disseminated?  
Please provide details**

## Section A: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Consumers

<b>Agencies and organisations have an awareness and understanding of the Carers Charter</b>			
7. Has the Carers Charter and the Carers Recognition Act been promoted and distributed across your organisation?			
Yes	No	Have commenced	Most staff have been informed
What % of staff is aware?			
None	Less than 50%	More than 50%	All
8. Has your agency analysed training needs of staff to recognise and address the needs of carers?			
Yes	No	In process	
<b>If yes, please comment</b>			
9. Do you provide training to staff in relation to raising awareness about carers who are consumers and their needs?			
Yes	No	Planning to	
<b>If yes, or planning to please specify</b>			
<b>If yes, or planning to: have carers or carer advocates been involved or consulted in the development and review of staff training?</b>			
Yes	No		
<b>If yes, please specify</b>			
<b>Information is available to specific carer groups and for transition points of caring role</b>			
10. Do you have a corporate strategy in place to ensure information and communication is provided to carers who are consumers which will assist them to make choices during the continuum of their caring role?			
Yes	No	Preparing one	Within other policies
<b>If yes, please provide detail</b>			
11. Has your agency consulted carers who are consumer on their needs for information and preferred means of distribution?			
Yes	No	In process	
<b>If yes, please provide detail</b>			
12. Do you have information for specific consumer carer groups eg young carers, Aboriginal carers, Carers of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?			
Yes	No	In part	
<b>If yes, please provide detail</b>			
Do you provide information which is specific to carers who are employees of your organisation?			
Yes	No		
<b>If yes, what information is provided, please specify</b>			

## Section A: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Consumers

### The health and wellbeing of the carer is improved

13. Do you have strategies for carers who are consumers, which will support them to maintain their health and wellbeing?

Yes	No	In process	
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**If yes, please provide detail**

### Carers play a critical role in maintaining the fabric of society

14. How are you promoting carer awareness in the workplace?

**Provide detail**

15. What has your organisation learned through this process?

**Provide detail**

### All children and young people have the right to enjoy life & reach their potential

16. Does your organisation support the rights of young carers to enrolment and attendance in school?

Yes	No	Further plans	
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**Provide detail**

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

### Consultations with Carers – on program or policy development; on strategic or operational planning

1. Have you consulted carers who are employees of your agency on workplace policies and practices which affect them?

Yes	No	Plan to
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**If yes, provide detail**

**If yes, what areas have you identified for change (or undertaken) as a result of the consultation with employees?**

2. Has there been allocation of staff and/or resources to undertake these processes?

Yes	No	Included in mainstream	
-----	----	------------------------	--

**If yes, please detail**

### The caring role is recognised as a partnership between the individual, carer and service provider

3. Have you developed information about the rights of carers who are employees?

Yes	No	In process	
-----	----	------------	--

**If yes, provide evidence or relevant weblink**

**If yes, how has this information been disseminated?**

### Agencies and organisation have an awareness and understanding of the Carers Charter

4. Has the Carers Charter and the Carer recognition Act been promoted and distributed across your organisation?

Yes	No	Have commenced	Most of staff have been informed
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What % of staff is aware?

None	Less than 50%	More than 50%	All
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5. Do you provide training to managers to raise awareness about carers who are employees and their needs?

Yes	No	Have commenced	Most of staff have been informed
-----	----	----------------	----------------------------------

**If yes, have you consulted or involved employees who are carers in the development and review of this training?**

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

### Information is available to specific carer groups and for transition points of caring role

6. Do you have a corporate strategy in place to ensure information and communication is provided to carers who are employees which will assist them to make choices in relation to employment arrangements?

Yes	No	Preparing one	Within other policies
-----	----	---------------	-----------------------

**If yes, please provide detail**

7. Has your agency consulted carers who are employees on their needs for information and preferred means of distribution?

Yes	No	In process	
-----	----	------------	--

**If yes, please provide detail**

8. Do you provide information which is specific to carers who are employees of your organisation?

Yes	No		
-----	----	--	--

**If yes, what information is provided, please specify**

9. Do you have information for employees eg young carers, Aboriginal carers, carers of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?

Yes	No	In part	
-----	----	---------	--

**If yes, please provide detail**

### The health and wellbeing of the carer is improved

10. Do you have strategies for carers who are your employees, which will support them to maintain their health and wellbeing?

Yes	No		
-----	----	--	--

**If yes, please provide detail**

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

### Carers play a critical role in maintaining the fabric of society

11. Has your agency developed policy and practises which are supportive and flexible to assist employees who are carers to balance their roles?

Yes	No	Commenced development	
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**If yes, please provide detail**

12. Do you have plans to improve policy and practices to support employees who are carers in the coming year?

Yes	No		
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**If yes, please provide detail**

13. How are you promoting carer awareness in the workplace?

**Provide detail**

14. Do you have strategies in place for carers (and in particular young carers), to assist in their entry or re-entry to the workplace?

Yes	No		
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**If yes, please provide detail**

15. What has your organisation learned through this process?

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## APPENDIX 2

### Department for Families and Communities (DFC)

#### Reporting against the Carers Recognition Act

The *Carers Recognition Act 2005* (the Act) requires carers to be recognised in their own right. The Act requires carers or their representative to be consulted in policy and program development or in strategic or operational planning which impact upon them and the carer role. The *SA Carers Charter* is a schedule of the Act. The Principles of the Charter identify specific areas for attention by State Government departments in providing services to carers or the people they care for.

DFC is one of six 'applicable' State Government departments identified to provide relevant services to carers and required to report compliance with the Act annually. Departments of Health; Education and Children's Services; Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology; Transport, Energy and Infrastructure; and the Justice Portfolio including South Australia Police are also required to comply.

In 2006, the Office for Carers was established to lead the implementation of the *Carers Recognition Act 2005* across government, and to administer the legislation and provide policy advice.

**Section 6 (1) of the Act requires that applicable State Government organisations and their employees have an awareness and understanding of the Carers Charter and take action in the provision of relevant services to carers to reflect those Principles.**

In 2007-08 we:

- distributed more than 3000 *Supporting Carers* folders which includes the Act, the *SA Carers Charter* and the *SA Carers Policy*, and other promotional material
- met DFC divisional representatives to identify ways to implement the requirements of the *Carers Recognition Act 2005* within this department. This Group acts as a conduit for the dissemination of information and awareness raising via team and division meetings; distribution of the *Supporting Carers* folders; and promotion of information (e.g. fact sheets available on the intranet)
- held carer information sessions for all Disability SA regional, program and specialist Managers
- attended the Disability Expo in September 2007 to meet and talk with carers and the people they care for and to provide information
- held Carers Week activities which raised the issue of employed carers
- disseminated a quarterly Office for Carers newsletter to carers, carer services, government and non-government organisations about the activities of the Office, as well as information of services, activities and issues pertaining to carers
- offered training to 168 Home and Community Care funded agencies in 15 metropolitan and rural South Australia locations in relation to the Act and the obligations for service providers. Other health service providers were invited to attend at many of the venues

## **Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees**

- informed Housing Services front line staff of the Act and its obligations in a multitude of formats
- provided information to the Ministerial Strategic Housing Advisory Committee and a number of Housing SA funded organisations and services
- have included specific clauses relating to the Carers legislation in current Service Agreements with agencies funded by the department
- have made information sheets available on our internet for non-government organisations regarding the Act and obligations pertaining to the Act and the Master and Service Agreements
- provided information regarding the *Carers Recognition Act 2005* to all new staff as a component of induction.

### **Principle 1 – Carers have choices within their caring role**

Carers need information about options, services and supports which is vital to enable carers to make choices for their caring role.

In 2007-08 we:

- launched the 'Grandparents Raising Grandchildren' information resource to relative caregivers in conjunction with Grandparents for Grandchildren SA Inc
- specifically considered the education and training needs of carers during development of the Strategic Plan for South Australian Carers (2009 -2012)
- introduced a new service delivery model in April 2008 in Housing SA which explores appropriate ways of identifying customers who are carers. Consideration will be given to involvement of carers in service planning and linking carers to support services if required.
- provided information on support systems and resources available to carers in *Disability Matters*, a publication of the Office for Disability and Client Services (ODACS). The Disability SA internet site provides links to information for carers.

### **Principle 2 - Carers health and wellbeing are critical to the community**

Carers health and wellbeing can be significantly and negatively affected by their caring role.

In 2007-08:

- the findings from national and state research specific to carer health and wellbeing was made available and the implications were considered at the government and reference group meetings. The research will inform policy directions
- health and wellbeing of carers received specific focus in the Strategic Plan for South Australian Carers (2009 -2012) in considering support requirements for the continuum of care; respite needs, training and social connection for carers
- Community Connect, through funded programs and services, supports carers by providing information on health and wellbeing, and effective future planning.

## **Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees**

Principle 3 - Carers play a critical role in maintaining the fabric of society

We have placed significant emphasis on the issues for our employees who also have caring responsibilities, considering workplace flexibility and family friendly policies, but also in promoting an organisational culture which supports and understands the needs and rights of carers. This includes the following:

- generic and specific policies applicable to employees who have caring and family responsibilities are available online
- employees who are carers were the focus of Carers Week 2007. Our Chief Executive, Sue Vardon, hosted a morning tea and subsequent events to consult on issues for working carers. Concerns were expressed by employees about variability in manager and work colleagues understanding and responsiveness to caring requirements. A support and action group was formed by employees/carers from these sessions
- the staff survey included a series of questions relating to employees who are carers. These questions will be a first step in estimating the number of carers working in our department and help determine strategies to assist carers balance the dual responsibilities
- Our Chief Executive hosted a blog on carers which opened discussion across the whole department and identified a range of ideas to be considered in supporting its employees
- information sessions and support to managers is provided via the human resource network. Issues about carers are integrated in our performance partnerships sessions and respectful treatment workshops, to ensure staff and managers are aware of the diversity of workforce and associated issues.

### **Principle 4 - Service providers work in partnership with carers**

The Act requires consultation with carers where decisions about care or treatment options have impact on the carer.

### **Section 6 (2) of the Act requires that applicable State Government organisations consult carers, or persons or bodies that represent carers, in policy or program development; or strategic or operational planning**

We have worked in partnership and consulted with carers in 2007-08:

- Office for Carers undertook statewide consultation with carers and carer support agencies. This has been used to shape key directions for the framework of the Strategic Plan for South Australian Carers 2009-12. The Plan represents an important step to addressing the key issues for South Australian carers and will provide direction for all parts of the sector to work together to improve services for SA carers
- our Chief Executive, Sue Vardon, chairs the South Australian Carers' Reference Group. This group provides information and advice to Government on issues affecting carers and the person(s) they care for
- the *Housing SA Customer Participation Strategy: 2008-11 (draft)* has been developed and aims to strengthen customer participation in planning, policy development, and service delivery through a wide range of consultation and feedback mechanisms and will provide opportunities for customers and stakeholders to participate in forums on policy, planning and service delivery matters

## **Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees**

- the Office for the Ageing (OFTA) has undertaken consultancies which specifically sought carers' input - *Geographic Gaps for Carer Services* and *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Carers Analysis*
- OFTA has undertaken Better Practice training for HACC funded services across the State. The training emphasises consumer and carer involvement in all decision making for all services
- support for carers is an integral part of the work of Disability SA. Consultation with carers occurred through a variety of avenues.

### **Principle 5 - Carers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities need specific consideration**

This was addressed in 2007-08 through:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers representation on the Carers' Reference Group
- *Talking Circles* which sought views on current services and future service needs at the Triennial Conference for Aboriginal consumers and carers
- an Aboriginal Standards and Ethics Committee which has been established to ensure services meet the needs of the consumer/carers
- the Aboriginal Disability Network (ADNSA) which is the mechanism used by Disability SA to seek and appoint Aboriginal Carer representation. ADNSA meets quarterly with Disability SA Directors
- Housing Services assisting Ngarrindjeri Elders in the Murray and Fleurieu Region participate in a program which aimed to improve communication and information exchange and to demystify processes thereby facilitating access to programs
- Office for Carers and Office for the Ageing led several consultation sessions with Aboriginal carers and Aboriginal service providers. The sessions informed both the development of the Strategic Plan for South Australian Carers (2009-2012) and HACC funding directions
- OFTA applying for funding to initiate an Aboriginal carers and Grandparents Needs Analysis in 2009. This project will provide the basis for specific funding allocations for Aboriginal carers within the HACC target group.

### **Principle 6 - All children and young people have the right to enjoy life and reach their potential**

Young people and children who are carers have been considered in policies and practices by:

- Carers Reference Group includes representation from young carers. In 2008 this Group gave specific focus to the issues of young carers
- our department has the lead for the South Australian Government in a study funded through the Australian Research Council exploring issues for young carers. The research undertaken by the Social Policy Research Centre (University of New South Wales) will provide a knowledge base to inform policy and service responses. In 2007-08 focus groups were held in South Australia as part of this study
- the Strategic Plan for South Australian Carers (2009 -2012) includes a specific focus on young carers
- OFTA currently funds projects in the northern and southern metropolitan areas to respond to young carers in an age appropriate manner, i.e. through educational support and social activities. These projects link with specific respite funding within the Commonwealth Respite Centres for young carers

## **Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees**

- Savings and Loans Credit Union (SA) Ltd approached our department in October regarding their Corporate Social Responsibility program with a view to assisting young carers by raising awareness of the issues and needs of young carers
- Community Benefit SA supports direct service provider agencies to develop programs and services that enable young carers to participate in further education and employment.

### **Principle 7 - Resources are available to provide timely, appropriate and adequate assistance to carers**

Informal carers represent the backbone of the community care system and in the context of a rising number of people in the community requiring care, an increasing proportion of the population are or will become carers. Resource allocation for carers will continue to be a priority.

In 2007-08:

- a statewide Strategic Plan was developed by the Office for Carers to progress the agenda for carers. The Plan will facilitate departments working together to establish an equitable, planned and co-ordinated response to carers
- OFTA continued to identify opportunities to improve existing services and develop new services. This includes:
  - statewide respite, providing the opportunity for carers to take time out to address their own emotional, social, physical and health needs
  - the Retreat Program, which has a regional focus. Retreats are one component of an integrated service delivery model which will focus on early intervention
  - \$650 000 funding has been allocated to respond to identified regional gaps in services (Adelaide Hills, Strathalbyn / Mt Compass, Kangaroo Island and outer southern metropolitan areas)
  - \$90 000 one-off funding has been allocated to support culturally and linguistically diverse communities in developing carer services. The culturally and linguistically diverse consultancy has provided the basis for funding six communities in the 2008-09 HACC Funding Round.
- Disability SA launched the Companion Card in December 2007
- Community Benefit SA continues to support carers. In financial year 2007-08 a total of 16 projects, totalling \$270 440 were funded, directly relating to carers and their needs.

## **Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees**

### **APPENDIX 3**

#### **Department of Health (DH)**

#### **SA CARERS RECOGNITION ACT 2005**

#### **SA HEALTH ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2007- 2008**

SA Health is a large, diverse portfolio involved in a wide range of activities that support many different health programs and services across the State.

*In broad terms:*

- The Department of Health provides a state-wide strategic policy and planning focus
- Health Regions and Health Units manage and coordinate services

The SA Health Report is a consolidated report that includes responses from the Department of Health, Health Regions and Health Units, on the progress being made to implement the Carers Policy and action taken to reflect the principles of the Carers Charter in the provision of services to carers and the people they care for. The initiatives and actions reported on in this report build on the work reported on in 2006-2007 and demonstrate that support for carers will be ongoing and part of health service reform and improvement.

#### ***SA Health includes:***

- Health (Central office)
- Central Northern Adelaide Health Service (CNAHS)
- Children, Youth & Women's Health Service (CYWHS)
- Country Health SA
- Institute of Medical & Veterinary Science (IMVS)
- Repatriation General Hospital (RGH)
- SA Ambulance Service (SAAS)
- Southern Adelaide Health Service (SAHS)

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

### SECTION A

#### REPORTING IN RELATION TO CARERS WHO ARE CONSUMERS

➤ **Policy and program development and operational planning that recognise the role of carers**

A major focus and priority for SA Health in 2007 – 2008 has been the reform of the public health system and the change in governance with the Health Care Act 2008 to come into effect on 1 July 2008. These changes will create a single, unified public health system with improved state-wide coordination and integration of services. These reforms will result in long term benefits for all those who use or work in the health system, including carers.

The Department of Health, Health Regions and Health Units use the SA Carers Policy and the SA Carers Charter to inform program and policy development and operational planning. The role and needs of carers is considered in all aspects of program and service planning and this includes consultation with carers/carers groups.

The Department of Health performance agreements with health regions and health units require them to implement the Carers Policy and provide annual progress reports on implementation to the Department of Health each year.

The Mental Health Bill 2008, which was introduced into Parliament for debate in June 2008, provides a contemporary framework for the provision of services to people with serious mental illness who are either unwilling or unable to consent to their own treatment. The Bill recognises the role of carers and supports the appropriate sharing of information in the interests of the patient, subject to certain restrictions.

The Department of Health has incorporated the carer perspective in policy and program development, particularly with regard to dementia care, chronic disease and mental health.

*For example:*

- Carer support is an important part of initiatives such as the Transition Care Program, Metro Home Link, Hospital in the Home and GP Plus Health Centres.
- The Transition Care program has developed an information pack ensuring clients and their carers are fully informed of their rights as part of the program.
- The proposed new guidelines for clients in hospital awaiting placement to a residential care facility include engagement of carers as part of the discharge planning process to ensure their rights and responsibilities are articulated in client agreement forms.

Health regions and health units have taken a range of initiatives to ensure the carer perspective is included in policy and program development and service provision.

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

*This has included:*

- Information sessions for staff about the SA Carers Recognition Act, the Carers Policy and Carers Charter.
- Awareness training for managers and senior staff.
- Consultation with carers and carers groups, including Aboriginal carers and young carers.

*Examples of actions taken include:*

- CNAHS – The Foundation Policy “Patient/Client/Consumer Rights & Responsibilities” states that CNAHS will “provide information to CNAHS employees about respecting the rights of patients/clients/consumers, and their carers, about the choice of care and treatment, even if no treatment is the choice”.
  - IMVS provides accessible collection sites, home blood collection and produces specific test information in different languages.
  - SAHS provides information packages for carers and the role and needs of carers is included in assessment, care planning and discharge planning.
  - Country Health - hospitals and country health services work closely with regional carer support programs and community aged care services.
  - RGH client management plans include consultation and consideration of the needs of carers.
- **Mechanisms that promote and/or seek representation/appointment of carers and/or carer advocates to advisory bodies/committees**

Carers and/or carers’ advocates are consulted and appointed to relevant advisory bodies/committees /forums.

Strategic planning carefully considers the role and needs of carers in all aspects of program planning and advice is sought from peak bodies when required.

*Examples include:*

- Mental Health Services have consulted with Carers SA and specialist mental health carers groups on policy, assessment and information processes. This has included developing a South Australian Mental Health Carer Policy in consultation with carers and working with carers on reform of non-government programs.
- Carer advocates and representatives are included in the Clinical Service Reform agenda through public consultation processes and inclusion on Clinical Networks.
- Carers have been consulted on the review of advance directives and on the review of *Your Rights and Responsibilities* (A Charter for Consumers of the South Australian Public Health System).

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

- CYWHS - The peak Consumer and Community Advisory Group has up to 15 consumers, several of whom are carers of children with special needs. A new advisory group is being established which will have 2 consumers to guide the implementation of the Chronic and Complex Care Coordination role.
- SAHS
  - Works closely with the Southern Carers Respite Centre and the local young carers support group RAW Energy.
  - Has community consultation processes in relation to hospitals and service arrangements for community health services, mental health, emerging GP Plus Health Centres, the expanded Accident and Emergency Department and the new development at FMC.
  - Adult Mental Health Service staff have developed a program called “Working with Carers as Partners” in the provision of care by clinicians.
- Country Health SA – All country hospitals and health services have policies and programs to involve carers in decisions about service arrangements that affect them.
- CNAHS includes carer consultation and representation on groups/forums such as the Healthy Ageing Implementation Group and Mental Health Consumer and Carer Advisory Groups.
- RGH involves carers through the Consumer Council, Hospital Quality Group and Future Directions Committee.
- **Assistance/support provided to carers to help sustain or improve their health and well being of carers**

The Department of Health and Health Regions provide many opportunities that assist carers to sustain and/or improve their health and wellbeing.

*For example:*

- Research undertaken by the Department’s Population Research and Outcome Studies Unit (PROS) and sponsored by Carers SA , ‘The Health and Wellbeing of Adult Family Carers in South Australia - An Epidemiological Analysis, 1994 - 2004’ was released in February 2008. The research identified the prevalence, quality of life and health status of carers.
- PROS gave presentations on the research findings of the study at two forums for service providers, health professionals and policy makers to inform them about the research and to promote discussion on the implications for service delivery.
- The 2008 Autumn SA Health Omnibus Survey included questions on carer issues, such as:
  - the impact of caring on carer health and well being;
  - the length of time caring and the nature of disability; and
  - the condition or illness, including mental illness, of the cared for person.

The national health call centre, *Healthdirect* was launched in South Australia in January 2008. It enables people who may not easily be able to access medical services, such as

## **Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees**

carers, to access telephone health advice from a registered nurse about the person for whom they are caring, or for themselves. This service is free and available 24 hours a day from anywhere in South Australia.

In 2005, as part of the mental health services reform, the state government allocated \$2.25m over 3 years for carers support and carers are being consulted on the reform of the non-government carer support programs.

Health promotion and screening programs look at ways to ensure carers are provided with information and assistance to take advantage of programs and services that will improve their health and well being.

SAHS - A multidisciplinary approach is taken when assessing patients/clients and carer role is identified and considered in care/discharge planning. Carers are provided with information and referred to home support services and carer support programs.

Country Health SA - The provision of information through links to relevant websites, pamphlets, brochures and referral to appropriate services and organisations is common throughout all health services. There are also a number of carer support groups that offer a range of activities that include 'looking after yourself' discussions, access to alternative health practitioners and community gardening. Some of these groups have been operating for many years.

### CNAHS

- BreastScreen SA (BSSA) offers a double appointment for clients who have a carer in attendance. Carers also have access to information on BSSA and are encouraged to attend for screening if eligible. Saturday morning appointments are available if this assists the carer to attend for screening.
- Acute and Specialist Services provide information through the Information Hub, counselling and assistance with the provision of aids and equipment to provide care in the community. Services are tailored to the needs of the patient and carer on discharge, based on assessment of need and access to services.
- MHU clinicians provide support and information to carers as a standard component of the assessment and treatment provided for clients. They employ Carer Consultants who work in Acute Mental Health Services to provide support, information and assistance for carers.
- SA Dental Service considers the needs of carers when making appointments which require additional travel and schedule appointments to suit carers' availability.

RGH - Elderly carers are provided with transport on-site if they have difficulty with walking and also accommodation and meals where necessary when visiting spouses in hospital.

CYWHS - Carers have access to a range of support services such as Aboriginal Liaison, Social Workers and chaplain services. They also have access to staff counselling and on-site gym and massage service. Country Carers are able to access accommodation either on-site or nearby when their children are hospitalised.

### ➤ **Information/support provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers**

## **Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees**

Service planning and service provision across SA Health includes consideration of the particular needs of Aboriginal carers. The Aboriginal Health Division of the Department of Health and the Aboriginal Health Council of SA are consulted on key policies and strategies to ensure consideration is given to the particular needs of Aboriginal carers.

The Mental Health Unit has created a Principal Aboriginal Mental Health Advisor position in its structure, which will be filled later in 2008.

SAHS - There are standard practices in Aboriginal Health Services to provide advice and support to carers, families and extended families. Community Health Services and GP Plus Health Care Centres provide support for Aboriginal women as these women are often carers of grandchildren .

*Other support includes:*

- Information, both written and verbal.
- Culturally appropriate space, along with practical and emotional support.
- Liaison with community support groups for ATSI carers and referrals to community agencies where appropriate.
- ATSI carers are covered by the policy on Patient/Client/Consumer Rights & Responsibilities.
- There has been consultation with ATSI patients and carers in the development of a Palliative Care Toolkit specifically targeting ATSI patients and carers.
- The FMC Consumer Committee has made approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Groups asking for a nominee to join the Council.

### CNAHS

- SA Dental Service works in collaboration with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services in a number of rural and remote locations, currently Coober Pedy, Yalata, Oak Valley and the APY Lands, increasing access to dental services for local Aboriginal people. The local health services facilitate the programs by ensuring that patients and their carers are brought to the clinic for appointments and returned home afterwards.
- Acute & Specialist Services – The CNAHS position paper on kinship in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities was developed to inform service providers across the region and to assist their development of health services, particularly regarding consent, and to provide useful information, contacts and practical tools to aid understanding and to provide strategies for worksites to acknowledge Aboriginal kinship.
- MHU employs Aboriginal workers who have a range of duties including liaison with ATSI carers and providing culturally appropriate information and resources to assist carers and those they care for.

### ➤ **Consider young carers in policies and practices which relate to carers**

The definition of carer in the Mental Health Bill 2008 refers to the definition in the Carers Recognition Act and is worded carefully to ensure that children and young people who are carers are not excluded from the definition.

The Bill further provides for the involvement of family/carers, including those who are children, in the development of Treatment and Care Plans, and states that the rights, welfare and safety of children of patients should always be considered and protected as far as possible.

## **Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees**

Young carers have been identified as a priority for funding for future non-government mental health carer support programs.

SAHS has processes in place to identify and support young carers. Referrals are made to carer support agencies and in particular the young carer support group RAW Energy. Mental health services work closely with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and the Children of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPMI).

CYWHS is implementing a Youth Participation Framework which will promote youth generally and provide a voice for young people who are carers.

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

### SECTION B

#### REPORTING IN RELATION TO CARERS WHO ARE EMPLOYEES

SA Health has policies and procedures in respect to voluntary flexible work practices that are available to employees to use on an as needs basis which it continues to apply and make available to support employees who are carers. This includes paid family carers leave, special leave with pay, leave without pay, part time employment, compressed weeks, purchased leave, etc. The new long service leave provision allows taking long service leave in single days which provides a range of new options for staff when balancing work and family commitments.

Training is available for Managers and HR personnel to ensure they are able to provide appropriate support and assistance to staff who are carers.

The Department of Health is planning to provide information about the Carers Charter and *Carers Recognition Act 2005* to staff at orientation sessions and will make this information available to staff via a link on the Health intranet and in staff lunch rooms.

The DH Employee Assistance Program provides counselling and support to employees who would like assistance to deal with issues which may affect their health and wellbeing. DH is in the process of developing a health and wellbeing program to assist employees in reducing risks and improving overall health.

SAAS – Whilst not targeting carers specifically, SAAS has a health and well-being program called SAASFit available to all staff which begins with a check-up by a doctor who assesses capability of undertaking the fitness test. The employees then meet with a health nutritionist and coach to undertake a goal setting process for the next 12 months. Once goals are set employees are eligible to obtain a \$299 reimbursement to assist in achieving their goals, ie gym membership, fitness equipment, etc.

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

### APPENDIX 4

#### Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS)

#### AGENCY DESCRIPTION

Name of your Organisation Department of Education and Children's Services

Which of the following categories best describe your organisation?

- a) We do not provide or fund direct services to Carers
- b) We fund services for Carers
- c) We are a service delivery organisation
- d) Other (please specify) Education and Support for carers

1. (a) Describe briefly what strategies you have used to promote the Carers Recognition Act throughout your organisation? (This question refers to Section 6 (1) of the Act). Examples: distribution of information, raised at staff meetings, education to Managers, staff training / education, staff newsletters, intranet/internet site posting, or others.

- Awareness raising through training and development sessions conducted by Child and Student Wellbeing Personnel.
- Promotion of the Young Carers Association.
- 25,000 DECS staff took part in Mandatory Notification Training which included information about carers.
- Dissemination of the Grandparents Raising Grandparents Advice Package.
- A circular from the Chief Executive was distributed via email and hard copy to all DECS sites in late September 2007 to promote the Carers Recognition Act (with a link to the DFC SA Carers site) and National Carers Awareness Week.
- Human Resources and Workforce Development (HR&WD) are running an awareness campaign on family friendly and flexible working provisions and will produce a hard copy and online version booklet for dissemination to all DECS sites (1,069) in November 2007 titled "Finding the Balance". This will include a specific section in relation to carers.

(b) If you have not yet promoted the Carers Recognition Act, how do you plan to do so?

- Continued training and development of all school personnel.
- Awareness raising with the Carers Association.
- Collating data to support DFC in evaluating the use of the ISD.

1. (a) What information does your organisation provide to Carers (including Employees) with specific information to assist them to make choices for their caring role?

(This question refers to Principle 1: "Carers have choices within their caring role")  
Examples: Referral / links to carer organisations, handouts / brochures for Carers, Policies & Procedures, Assessment tools, Carer specific services, translated materials, media or other. Please list below

- Referring students for support through the interagency process to DECS

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

Social Workers and /or other agencies.

- Referring Grandparents and other relative carers to community groups for support.
- Distributing handouts and brochures.
- Inviting Carer organisations to visit schools to inform the school community of their work.
- Information disseminated to staff via staff meetings, handouts etc re carers leave entitlements. Contact details published re DECS personnel to deal with confidential issues.

(b) What information do you plan to make available to Carers in 2007 / 2008?

- The distribution of the booklet to employees 'Finding the Balance' covering flexible working arrangements by HR&WD
- Distribution of the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Informal Relative Carers Statutory Declaration Package and information booklets

2. (a) What opportunities do you provide which will assist Carers to sustain or improve their health and wellbeing?

(This question refers to Principle 2: "Carers Health and wellbeing are critical to the community")

- School Counsellors, Home Group Teachers, School Leaders supporting young carers through sensitive management of their individual school curriculum and timetabling, to enable the young carer to progress with their education in the most positive and supportive environment possible.
- Supporting Grandparents and other Carers through raising awareness of the ISD and the information booklets supplied by DFC.
- DECS awareness campaign for employees around flexible working provisions.
- HR&WD are conducting a Statewide Gender Equity consultation in October/November 2007. One mechanism, a voluntary questionnaire, will be made available to DECS employees (approximately 25,000) and a specific section has been developed to gather information from employees who are short – long term carers, and to seek suggestions on how DECS can better support employees who are carers.

(b) What plans do you have in relation to this Principle for 2007 / 2008?

- As above (3)
- Responding to issues and suggestions that arise through the Statewide Gender Equity consultation.

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

1. (a) What workplace policies and practices do you have which assists carers to balance their work and caring roles?

(This question refers to Principle 3: "Carers play a critical role in maintaining the fabric of society")

Examples: Consultation, flexible work practices, Paid Carers leave, Unpaid Leave, Management Education or other. Please list below.

- As above (3)
- DECS employs staff under three Acts; Education Act 1972, Children's Services Act 1985 and the PSM Act 1995. In addition, three enterprise agreements are in operation. Voluntary Flexible Working Arrangement policies and procedures currently available under this legal framework are:
  - *HR03 Voluntary Flexible Working Conditions Policy*
  - HR03A Flexitime Procedures
  - HR03B Compressed Weeks Procedures
  - HR03C Purchased Leave Procedures
  - HR03D Working at Home Procedures
  - *HR04 Special Leave Policy*
  - *HR08 Voluntary Flexible Working Provisions – School Services Officers*
  - HR08A Flexitime Procedures – School Services Officers
  - HR08B Compressed Weeks Procedures – School Services Officers
  - HR08C Purchased Leave Procedures – School Services Officers
  - *HR12 Voluntary Flexible Working Provisions – Weekly Paid Employees*
  - *HR14 Part-time Policy*
  - HR14A Part-time Operational Procedures for Teachers (Schooling Sector)
  - *HR15 Purchased Leave Policy – School and Preschool Teaching Staff*
  - *HR18 Work-life Balance Policy (currently being promulgated)*
- All staff can access up to 10 days of accrued leave as Family Carers Leave.

For schools, the question will relate to young carers: Do you have policies and practices to assist young carers to balance their caring and learning roles.

(This question refers to Principle 3: "Carers play a critical role in maintaining the fabric of society")

- Depending on the age of the student options can include part time schooling/ alternative programs/Open Access/after hours tutoring/mentoring/curriculum selection etc

(b) What plans do you have in relation to this Principle for 2007/8?

- Representation on The Young Carers ARC Linkage Project, Young Carers in Education Working Group, Young Carers and Mental Health Project, Young Carer Mental Health Schools Liaison Project and Whole of Government Carers Implementation Group.
- Continue awareness raising by giving feedback to DECS employees and policy makers, ensuring the carers 'voice' is heard.

2. (a) How does your organisation ensure that Carers are involved in decisions about service arrangements that affect them? Please specify the strategies used to achieve this.

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

(This question refers to Principle 4: "Service providers work in partnership with carers")

Examples: Staff Information, Staff Training, Policies & Procedures, Assessment tools or other.

- Staff Training and Development

(b) What plans do you have to in relation to this Principle for 2007/8?

- Ongoing Training and Development

3. (a) Do your policies and practices specifically relating to Carers address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers?

(Refers to Principle 5: "Carers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities need specific consideration")

- In terms of employees, DECS Special Leave Policy includes specific provisions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait employees for short term (up to 15 days) and long term (greater than 15 days) leave.

(b) Has there been consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers in considering service provision and development?

- There was during the development of the Special Leave Policy which was promulgated in DECS in July of this year.

(c) Do you have information which targets Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers and those they care for?

(d) What plans do you have to in relation to this Principle for 2007/8?

- Responding to any issues an/or suggestions that arise through the Statewide Gender Equity consultation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait employees.

4. (a) Do you specifically consider young carers in policies and practices which relate to carers?

(This question refers to Principle 6: "All children and young people have the right to enjoy life and reach their potential")

- Young carers can be supported to reach their potential and live fulfilling, enjoyable lives by DECS supporting and encouraging them to attend school and to engage in relevant educational programs.

(d) What plans do you have to in relation to this Principle for 2007/8?

- Initiatives such as training of School Counsellors to be aware of the support required by these young people and in turn to raise awareness throughout the school community

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

5. (a) What resources have you made available to carers?  
(Refers to Principle 7: "Resources are available to provide timely, appropriate and adequate assistance to carers?")

- Training of school staff, through programs such as Mandatory Notification Training to identify young carers who require support, and to develop links with other providers and agencies in the community to ensure this is available..

- (b) What unmet needs and/or resource gaps have you identified for your organisation in relation to carers?

DECS data collection systems still have limited capacity to report accurate data, particularly in terms of carers as defined by the Act.

6. (a) How does your organisation receive feedback from carers and involve carers in improving the way your services are delivered?

(This question refers to Section 6 (2) of the Act)

Examples: Consumer / Carer Advisory Committees, consultation forums, Complaints systems, satisfaction surveys or other. Please specify.

- Young Carers are encouraged to give feedback through their Student Representative Council, the Pastoral Care System, Student Counsellors and the District Student Inclusion and Wellbeing Teams.
- DECS has representation on a number of groups representing Carers to ensure clear feedback is received from the community of carers.

- (b) What plans do you have to further this objective for 2007/8?

- Counsellor Induction Programs to include awareness raising of the needs and roles of carers
- Encouragement of collaborative practices including developing stronger links with other services supporting carers in the community.

***While the following questions are not required by the legislation your answers would assist in identifying areas for improvement for the next year. The Office for Carers would be pleased to support your organisation's efforts to improve compliance.***

7. What are the challenges for your organisation to implement the Carers Recognition Act?

- Accurately identifying carers, both employees and students who for their own reasons conceal this aspect of their lives.
- Potential cost of the provision of hard copy information to further raise awareness of the Act (see question 11).
- Resources (particularly staff) and cost effective strategies to build managers understanding and application of the Act. However key HR&WD staff are now aware of the Act and will look to include information where possible e.g. flexible work provisions training with corporate managers in 2008.

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

- Data collection. DECS data collection systems still have limited capacity to report accurate data, particularly in terms of carers as defined by the Act, and also in terms of tracking the use of flexible working provisions in terms of caring responsibilities.

8. What would assist your organisation to implement the Carers Recognition Act?

- In a large dispersed department, where information technology systems have a limited capacity, and in school sites where hard copy information is more accessible, *provision at no cost* to DECS of hard copies of the 'The SA Carers Charter' as a minimum and possibly the 'SA Carers Policy' booklet for distribution to sites would be very useful.

9. How will you improve your compliance with the Carers Recognition Act in 2007 /8 and beyond?

- In terms of employees, we believe we will improve compliance through the two key strategies identified – raising the profile of carers in the Family friendly and flexible working provisions awareness campaign and gathering information and issues in the Statewide Gender Equity Consultation questionnaire, as well as implementing action to question 11 if supported.

APPENDIX 5

Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology

DFEEST Annual Report 2007 – Section E

142 Other Reporting Items **Carers Recognition Act  
2005**

**2**

2007 is the first year DFEEST has reported on the Carers Recognition Act which

was proclaimed in 2005. The objects of the Act are to 'recognise and support carers and their role in the community' and to 'provide reporting of actions taken to reflect the principles of the Carers Charter in the provision of services relevant to carers and the persons they care for'.

DFEEST is one of five departments required to report on compliance with our obligations relating to the Carers Charter. This Charter requires DFEEST to 'take all practical measures to ensure that the organisation and its officers, employees or agents have an awareness and understanding of the Carers Charter and take actions to reflect the principles of the Charter in the provision of relevant services of the organisation.'

The information provided is prescribed in the act and is required for incorporation in the annual report. As this is the first year that DFEEST has undertaken the obligations of the Charter much of the work done to date has been introductory and it is anticipated that in 2008 there will be considerable progress in the provision of relevant services as reflected by the Act.

*Describe briefly the strategies you have used to 1. promote the Carers Recognition Act throughout your organisation. (Refers to Section 6 (1) of the Act)*

At the strategic policy level, the DFEEST Workforce Development Platform 2010 identifies and supports the needs of carers. The voluntary flexible working hours arrangements which includes compressed hours, flexitime, and working from home have been incorporated into enterprise bargaining arrangements.

Line managers are encouraged to support employees who may be carers and facilitate a flexible approach to work at the unit level to meet the personal demands and issues impacting on carers.

Other policy vehicles that raise awareness and understanding of carer and related issues include our Disability Action Plan and Critical Incident policy.

Within TAFE SA, access and equity committees monitor, report and recommend actions to assist with issues impacting on carers.

*(a) What specific information does your organisation 2. provide to carers (including employees) to assist them to make choices for their caring role?*

A coordinated approach is being developed to assess the adequacy of related policies, the appropriateness of our communication strategies, and the effectiveness of our reporting of our information sources for carers.

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

*(b) What information do you plan to make available to carers in 2007-08?*

Further development work will be undertaken to formalise the consultation process with carer representatives to assist with determining delivery services and the impact of decisions on carers. Work will also be undertaken to continue to raise a level of awareness and understanding across the department and identify staff with carer roles and responsibilities. To assist in this, we intend to examine the establishment of a consultation group and evaluate the ACE destination survey.

*(a) What opportunities do you provide which will 3. assist carers to sustain or improve their health and wellbeing? (Refers to Principle 2: Carers health and wellbeing are critical to the community)*

The adoption of Voluntary Flexible Working arrangements and the development and alignment of family friendly policies as a priority provide, at a corporate level support for the general wellbeing of carers.

*(b) What plans do you have in relation to this Principle for 2007-08?*

An assessment of policy and program effectiveness will be undertaken as part of developing a more integrated approach to carers in 2008.

*(a) What workplace policies and practices do you 4. have which assist carers to balance their work and caring roles? (Refers to Principle 3: carers play a critical role in maintaining the fabric of society)*

To assist carers in balancing their work and caring roles, a number of flexible work practices are available for individuals directly involved. A range of leave options are also available and line managers are encouraged to support and mentor all employees in maintaining a work life balance.

For schools, the question will relate to young carers: Do you have policies and practices to assist young carers to balance their caring and learning roles?

Students who may be carers will be provided with information at the time of enrolment relating to support offered through student service support staff. This information will also be provided through our website.

*(b) What plans do you have in relation to this Principle for 2007-08?*

It is intended to ensure in the coming year, that specific effort will be placed on raising the level of awareness of carers and the support services offered to them.

*(a) How does your organisation ensure that carers are involved in decisions about service arrangements that affect them? Please specify the strategies used to achieve this. (Refers to Principle 4: Service providers work in partnership with carers).*

Existing consultation strategies provide some avenues of interaction between the department and carers, but it has been identified that a more formalised approach may be needed to enhance the consultation with carers and their representatives. Raising awareness within the department will also improve opportunities for feedback between parties to better identify strategies to address the needs of carers.

*Do your policies and practices specifically relating to carers address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers? (Refers to Principle 5: Carers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities need specific consideration).*

Initial consultation has taken place to identify policies and practices specifically related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers and it is intended to further this work in 2008.

*Do you specifically consider young carers in policies and practices which relate to carers? (Refers to Principle 6: All children and young people have the right to enjoy life and reach their potential).*

## **Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees**

Young staff and students who may be carers are covered by the policies and practices outlined above.

*What resources have you made available to carers? 7. (Refers to Principle 7: Resources are available to provide timely, appropriate and adequate assistance to carers).*

It is intended to undertake an analysis of our strategies in order to more appropriately respond to the needs of carers, both staff and students. Further consideration will be given to the development of effective information management systems and of performance measures to assess the effectiveness of our strategies.

*How does your organisation receive feedback from 8. carers and involve carers in improving the way your services are delivered? (Refers to Section 6 (2) of the Act).*

The establishment of a consultation group and a formal process of engaging with carer representatives will assist in dealing with feedback from carers and help shape support and service and delivery plans.

There is a need to ensure that we have a complaints handling mechanism that addresses the concerns of carers.

*What are the challenges for your organisation to 9. implement the Carers Recognition Act?*

Challenges arise in determining what information or data is required, what we have already got and what we expect to need in the future.

Information data collection is based on self disclosure and further strategies for improving this collection (like including questions in staff and student surveys) need to be considered.

Subsequent analysis of resource implications and impact on carers must be determined.

The development of effective measures to determine success must also be established.

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

### APPENDIX 6

## The Justice Portfolio (including South Australian Police SAPOL)

### Appendix 10 Reporting against the Carers Recognition Act

SAPOL provides policing to the community generally and not carers specifically. In relation to SAPOL employees SAPOL is to report on action taken to reflect the requirements of the *Carers Recognition Act 2005*. The attached completed template is provided in accordance to the reporting requirements of the *Carers Recognition Act 2005*.

Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees		
<b>Consultations with Carers – on program or policy development; on strategic or operational planning</b>		
1. Have you consulted carers who are employees of your agency on workplace policies and practices which affect them?		
Yes	<b>No</b>	Plan to
If Yes, provide detail		
If Yes, what areas have you identified or undertaken for changes as a result of the consultation with employees?		
N/A		
2. Has there been allocation of staff and/or resources to undertake these processes?		
Yes	<b>No</b>	Included in mainstream
If Yes, provide detail		
<b>The caring role is recognised as a partnership between the individual, carer and service provider</b>		
3. Have you developed information about the rights of carers who are employees?		
<b>Yes</b>	No	In process
If Yes, provide evidence or relevant web link?		
An overview of the SA Carers Policy: Supporting Carers which incorporates the Carers Recognition Act 2005 and Carers Charter is contained in the SAPOL internal significant communication strategy 'SA Carers Policy: Supporting Carers'. All SAPOL employees have access to the SA Carers Recognition Policy and SA Carers Recognition Act 2005 through the SAPOL Intranet Equity and Diversity Section Home page, via a link to Disability.		
<a href="http://intra.sapol.sa.gov.au/sapol/services/human_resources/equity_diversity_section/disability.jsp">http://intra.sapol.sa.gov.au/sapol/services/human_resources/equity_diversity_section/disability.jsp</a>		
Note: this relevant web link can only be accessed by SAPOL employees.		
In addition SAPOL's Disability Awareness Training (on-line) contains a component on the Carers Recognition Act 2005, in particular the Carers Charter. This training is compulsory and has been undertaken through out SAPOL at all levels.		

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

If Yes, how has this information been disseminated?

In July 2007, the SAPOL SA Carers Policy: Supporting Carers internal significant communication strategy was promulgated throughout SAPOL by the following means:

- SAPOL's Senior Executive Group (SEG) members were provided with a package containing an overview of the internal communication strategy and delivery schedule on 12 July 2007.
- SEG members briefed all their LSA/Branch/Group Commanders/Managers prior to 16 July 2007.
- LSA/Branch/Group Commanders/Managers addressed all frontline supervisors (Senior Sergeants, Sergeants and relevant ASO3, 4 and 5) at specially convened forums within their Service Areas.
- Frontline Supervisors gave presentations to their frontline staff between 22 and 26 July 2007.

In addition:

As an introductory measure SAPOL provides new public sector employees with an induction handbook to explain the conditions of service and responsibilities for an employee under the Public Sector Management Act. This induction handbook makes specific reference to the *Carers Recognition Act 2005 (SA)* and informs new staff that all officers, employees or agents should have an awareness and understanding of the South Australian Carers Charter and take action to reflect the principles of the Charter.

The Disability Management training program is incorporated within the Police Recruit Training Package, Constable Development Program, Management Programs and the Promotional Qualification Framework.

SAPOL is currently developing the Police Volunteers Program Manual in which reference is made to the flexibility of the SAPOL volunteer program in regards to those volunteers who provide support and care to someone with a disability, physical or mental illness, or who is frail or has a substance abuse problem, and elect to be involved as a volunteer within the program.

Agencies and organisation have an awareness and understanding of the Carers Charter			
4. Has the Carers Charter and the Carer Recognition Act been promoted and distributed across your organisation?			
<b>Yes</b>	No	Have commenced	Most staff have been informed
What % of staff is aware?			
None	Less than 50%	More than 50%	<b>All</b>

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

5. Do you provide training to managers to raise awareness about carers who are employees and their needs?			
<b>Yes</b>	No	Have commenced	Most staff have been informed
If Yes, have you consulted or involved employees who are carers in the development and review of this training?			
No			

### Information is available to specific carer groups and for transition points of caring role

6. Do you have a corporate strategy in place to ensure information and communication is provided to carers who are employees which will assist them to make choices in relation to employment arrangements?			
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<b>Yes</b>	No	Preparing one	Within other policies
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If Yes, provide detail

SAPOL has a number of flexible working arrangement options, all of which are available to both police officers and public sector employees. These options include flexible working arrangements, special leave without pay (parental leave, purchased leave, leave for individual needs and responsibilities) and special leave with pay (family carers leave). These arrangements are designed to assist carers achieve balance between their work and caring role.

7. Has your agency consulted carers who are employees on their needs for information and preferred means of distribution?

Yes	<b>No</b>	In process
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If Yes, provide detail

8. Do you provide information which is specific to carers who are employees of your organisation?

<b>Yes</b>	No
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If Yes, what information is provided, please specify

As set out in the response to question 3, SAPOL has developed and continues to provide information pertaining to the *Carers Recognition Act 2005 (SA)* and the Carers Charter to all employees of the organisation.

9. Do you have information for employees eg young carers, Aboriginal carers, Carers of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?

Yes	<b>No</b>	In part
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If Yes, please provide detail

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

The health and wellbeing of the carer is improved	
10. Do you have strategies for carers who are your employees, which will support them to maintain their health and wellbeing?	
<b>Yes</b>	No
If Yes, please provide detail  SAPOL has an Employee Assistance Section which provides services to support all SAPOL employees. This section provides counselling support in a range of areas inclusive of relationships, stress management and work difficulties. Depending on the issue to be addressed, specific strategies can be developed accordingly.	

## **Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees**

### **APPENDIX 7**

#### **Primary Industries and Resources SA (PIRSA)**

Although not mandated to report against the Act PIRSA submitted for the second year a report detailing its current status and relevance for carers.

PIRSA is considering conducting a staff climate survey in relation to the full range of human resource management areas in the future which may include carer issues.

Employees are provided with electronic information about carer issues and flexible work arrangements.

Flexible work arrangements are available to employees as a matter of course and carers are able to avail themselves of them.

In relation to promoting and seeking representation and appointment of carers to advisory bodies and committees generally, PIRSA are currently developing a Boards and Committees Policy.

Carer issues will be considered for possible inclusion in existing cross cultural training programs and at present does feature in People with Disabilities Awareness materials.

Specific needs and access for carers to training and development will also be considered.

Research for an intranet of resources is presently being conducted.

## Section B: Reporting in relation to Carers who are Employees

### APPENDIX 8

#### **Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC)**

Although not mandated to report against the Act DPC submitted its first report detailing its current status and relevance for carers.

#### **Principle 1 – Carers have choices within their caring role.**

DPC introduced and endorsed a number of initiatives for its employees which had been undertaken in DFC and other Departments. This included the then CE, Mr Warren McCann hosting a morning tea during Carers Week for DPC employees who have caring responsibilities.

Additionally, the DPC Disability Action Plan and Access Policy were amended to include reference to carers and the amendments promoted. DPC also increased the amount of carers leave from 10 to 20 days. A fact sheet detailing leave entitlements and flexible work arrangement options has been developed for accessed via the intranet.

#### **Principle 2 - Carers Health and Wellbeing are critical to the community**

DPC contributed with other Departments to the development of a submission in relation to the Federal Inquiry by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth Inquiry into Better Support for Carers.