

## ***SA Carers Recognition Act 2005***

### ***Frequently asked questions***

#### **What is the SA Carers Recognition Act?**

The SA Carers Recognition Act (the *Act*) acknowledges the valuable role of carers in supporting those they care for within the community. The South Australian Government approved the *Act* which includes the SA Carers Charter on 1 December 2005.

#### **Who are carers?**

The *Act* identifies a 'carer' as someone who provides ongoing care and assistance to a person who has a disability (according to the Disability Services Act 1993), or a person who is frail and requires assistance to carry out everyday tasks, or a person with a chronic illness, including a mental illness (as defined by the Mental Health Act 1993).

#### **Who is not covered by the Act?**

The *Act* does **not** cover people who are employed to care for someone, or who provide care as volunteers in community organisations. A carer of a child placed in care under the Children's Protection Act 1993 or similar Act, is only considered a carer if the child has a disability, chronic or mental illness.

#### **What does the Act require the South Australian Government to do?**

Relevant SA Government Departments and the organisations they fund are required to demonstrate an awareness of the *Act* with services they provide and reflect the Principles of the Carers Charter in the provision of service. The *Act* requires service providers to consult with carers or their representatives when developing or delivering services. Relevant SA Government Departments are obligated to report against the requirements of the *Act* annually.

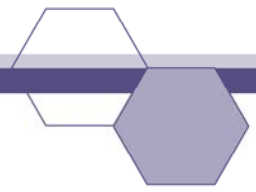
#### **What is the SA Carers Charter?**

The SA Carers Charter is a Schedule of the *Act* and sets out the Principles that must guide services for carers:

1. Carers have choices within their caring role.
2. Carers' health and well-being is critical to the community.
3. Carers play a critical role in maintaining the fabric of society.
4. Service providers work in partnership with carers.
5. Carers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities need specific consideration.
6. All children and young people have the right to enjoy life and reach their potential.
7. Resources are available to provide timely, appropriate and adequate assistance to carers.

#### **How does the Carers Recognition Act help me?**

The *Act* aims to ensure carers have the same rights, choices and opportunities as other South Australians. The *Act* recognises the importance of carers' health and wellbeing, and that carers need to be consulted in decisions and planning that affect them.



### **What financial support am I entitled to as a carer?**

As a carer, you may be eligible to receive financial support from Centrelink. For more information, call Centrelink on 13 12 02 (Multilingual) or visit your nearest Centrelink Office.

### **How can I get a break?**

A number of respite services assist carers to take time out for themselves. What type of respite suits you will depend on your caring situation and services available in your area. For more information call Commonwealth Carelink and Respite Centres on 1800 052 222.

### **Where can I go for other support?**

Other support for carers (e.g. counselling, support groups, advocacy, young carer programs) is provided by locally based carer support organisations. For information or assistance in finding services in your area, you can call the Carer Advisory Service on 1800 242 636. Alternatively, you can find the service closest to you by searching the map on [www.sa.gov.au/carers](http://www.sa.gov.au/carers).

### **What are my rights as a working carer?**

The South Australian Equal Opportunity Act 1984 makes it unlawful for anyone to be treated unfairly because of caring responsibilities, or for requirements to be set that are especially difficult for carers to meet and are unreasonable. For more information, contact the South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission on 8207 1977 or 1800 188 163 or visit their website [www.eoc.sa.gov.au](http://www.eoc.sa.gov.au).

### **How can I prove I'm a carer? Should I register somewhere?**

There is no uniform assessment that makes you eligible for all services, supports and payments. Some agencies, e.g. Centrelink, may conduct formal assessments, others may not.

### **If I am not happy with a service, what can I do?**

You can raise your concerns with the service provider directly. If you feel the outcome is not satisfactory, you can contact the relevant advocacy service:

- The Aged Rights Advocacy Service assists consumers of aged care services and their carers with service related issues, call 8232 5377 or 1800 700 600.
- The Disability Advocacy and Complaints Service of SA provides information about concerns with disability services, call 8297 3500 or 1800 088 325.
- The Office of the Public Advocate protects the interests of people with reduced mental capacity and their carers, call 8342 8200 or 1800 066 969.
- The Welfare Rights Centre assists people with information and support concerning Centrelink, call 8223 1338 or 1800 246 287.

If, after all reasonable steps have been taken, you are still not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint, you can contact the office of the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner, call 8226 8666 or 1800 232 007.

### **Where can I find more information on the Act, Carers Charter and SA Carers Policy?**

For more information visit the SA Government website [www.sa.gov.au/carers](http://www.sa.gov.au/carers).

### **Where can I get assistance with a language other than English?**

Assistance can be provided by the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS). Call 13 14 50. The agency or person that calls TIS is responsible to pay for the service.

