

# Factsheet on the *Carers Recognition Act 2005 (SA)* and the South Australian Carers Charter

## About carers

Around 245,000 people in South Australia are unpaid carers. This means they provide personal care, support or assistance to a person who:

- has a disability,
- is experiencing mental ill health,
- has a medical condition (including a terminal or chronic illness, or dementia)
- is frail due to age
- is experiencing alcohol or other drug dependence.<sup>1</sup>

Carers make an invaluable contribution to our community. In Australia, carers provide 2.2 billion hours of unpaid care annually.<sup>2</sup> Replacing this with formal paid care would cost around \$80 billion.<sup>3</sup>

While many carers report that caring can be rewarding and that it gives them a sense of purpose, it often comes at significant personal cost. This includes negative impacts on a person's health and wellbeing, financial security, education, employment and other life opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> *Carers Recognition (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2005 (SA)*, section 5.

<sup>2</sup> Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, *Recognising, valuing and supporting unpaid carers: inquiry into the recognition of unpaid carers*, [https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/committees/reportrep/RB000193/toc\\_pdf/Recognising\\_valuingandsupportingunpaidcarers.pdf](https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/committees/reportrep/RB000193/toc_pdf/Recognising_valuingandsupportingunpaidcarers.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

## Purpose of the Carers Recognition Act

The *Carers Recognition Act 2005 (SA)* (the Act) supports recognition of the important contributions carers make not only to the lives of those they support, but also to workplaces and the broader community.

The Act explains what South Australian public sector agencies and those contracted to deliver services for carers must do to help create carer-friendly workplaces, programs and policies. It also requires public sector agencies to report on compliance with obligations under the Act in their annual reports.

## Impacts of the Carers Recognition Act

Implementing the Act will lead to more inclusive workplaces and communities, resulting in greater financial security, connectedness and wellbeing for carers in South Australia.

Workplaces will benefit from improved employee retention, reduced absenteeism and better staff morale.

The Act will also give people greater confidence that if they become a carer they will be supported to continue to look after their health, social, cultural and economic wellbeing.

## SA Carers Charter

The Act states that public sector agencies, as well as people and bodies they contract to deliver services for carers and the people they care for, must:

- make sure their staff are aware of and understand the Carers Charter, and
- deliver such services in a way that aligns with the principles of the Carers Charter, and
- consider the Carers Charter when developing their human resource policies.

An updated version of the South Australian Carers Charter applies from 1 July 2026. It consists of 12 principles which are listed below.

## The 12 principles

1. A carer should be respected and recognised as—
  - (a) an individual with their own needs; and
  - (b) a carer; and
  - (c) someone with knowledge of the person receiving care; and
  - (d) a partner in care with other service providers.
2. A carer should be recognised and valued for—
  - (a) their vital role in South Australian society, delivering significant social benefits to individuals, their families and the broader community; and
  - (b) their significant economic contribution which supports the effective operation of the health, aged care and child protection systems; and
  - (c) their significant personal sacrifices, forgoing careers, social lives, education and financial security to care for others, which can impact their mental and physical wellbeing; and
  - (d) the skills they gain through caring which are valuable and transferable to the workforce.
3. A carer should be supported during changes to the care relationship.
4. A carer should have their social spiritual, cultural and economic wellbeing and health recognised in matters relating to the care relationship.
5. A carer should be provided with support that is timely, responsive, appropriate, respectful, culturally safe and accessible.
6. Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander carers should be supported in ways that recognise and respect their right to self-determination and their unique cultural identity and kinship relationships.
7. The gendered impact of caring roles should be recognised and considered in relevant decision making, including impacts that lower rates for self-identification of carers, as well as carers' participation in employment and education.
8. The specific needs of young carers (aged 25 and under) should be recognised, supported and acted on so that they have the support and opportunities needed to reach their full potential.
9. The unique and complex roles of informal carers, which may include grandparents, siblings, family friends, Aboriginal collective kinship care and other family and

kinship relationships, should be recognised and supported irrespective of any ambiguities around guardianship and legal status.

10. Carers who continue to provide practical, emotional, personal support for the person they care for, even when they have transitioned into supported residential services, should be recognised for the significant and ongoing advocacy role for the person they care for.
11. Carers reflect the diversity of our communities, and all carers should be provided with appropriate and safe support services that consider their specific and unique needs, including—
  - (a) carers from LGBTIQ+ communities; and
  - (b) culturally and linguistically diverse carers; and
  - (c) older carers (aged 65 and above); and
  - (d) defence family and veterans' carers; and
  - (e) carers with disability; and
  - (f) carers who live in regional and remote locations.
12. The intersectionality of carers must be acknowledged to address the additional barriers, challenges and discrimination carers with overlapping identities face, including—
  - (a) ethnicity; and
  - (b) culture; and
  - (c) religion; and
  - (d) age; and
  - (e) sexual orientation; and
  - (f) gender identity; and
  - (g) disability; and
  - (h) neurodivergence; and
  - (i) socioeconomic status; and
  - (j) geographical location.

## Further information

- The *Carers Recognition Act* can be found at [www.legislation.sa.gov.au](http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au)
- More about the *Carers Recognition Act* and the SA Carers Charter at <https://dhs.sa.gov.au/cra>
- Email enquiries about the *Carers Recognition Act* to us at [DHSCarersPolicy@sa.gov.au](mailto:DHSCarersPolicy@sa.gov.au)