

# Strategic Plan 2008-11



Supporting Family Carers

## Vision

Caring is accepted as a shared community responsibility.

## Mission

Leading change and action with and for Carers.

## Definition

Carers provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness or who are frail aged.

## Who we are

Carers ACT is the recognised and expert voice with and for Carers, as well as being the major provider of Carer services and supports in the ACT. Carers ACT is a member of the National Network of Carers Associations. We are a non government, not for profit association that relies on public and private sector support to fulfil our mission with and on behalf of Carers. We are governed by a volunteer board of directors with family caring and professional skills who set the strategic direction of the organisation and oversee financial and legal governance.



## What we do

- Deliver Carer services and support programs
- Lead change through representation, policy development and advice to government
- Provide information, education and training for Carers and service providers.

## How We Will be Known

Carers ACT will continue to build its reputation as the expert voice with and for Carers, with recognition and respect growing to new levels across all sectors of the ACT community.

In the eyes of Carers and the community we will be :

- Bold and innovative in what we do
- Forthright in representing Carers' needs and issues
- Known for quality and excellence in services and programs
- Sought after for opinion, advice and solutions
- Independent of government and all political parties
- Well governed and accountable to Carers, funders and key partners.

## The Changes We Strive for

**AIM:** Carers enjoy improved health, wellbeing, resilience and financial security.

*Measures within next three years:*

- Better access to services and support
- Time out from caring role and reduced stress
- Better coping skills
- Increased knowledge and life skills.

**AIM:** Caring is recognised as a shared responsibility of family, community, business and government

*Measures within next three years:*

- Increased public awareness of caring and Carers' issues
- Governments gives higher priority to Carers' issues
- Enhanced funding for Carer services
- Open relationships with government agencies.

## Guiding Principles

- Carer centred practice
- Carer participation in decisions
- Family friendly and inclusive processes
- Access and equity
- Recognising cultural diversity
- Respect for Indigenous culture and heritage
- A skilled and valued workforce
- Learning and future orientation
- Working from an evidence base
- Collaboration and partnership
- Openness and accountability

## Context

Becoming a Carer can happen to anyone at any time. Carers are as diverse in their needs, lifestyles and identity as anyone in the broader population. Carers may be children, young people, or men and women of all ages. Each care situation is different. For the people involved, it is a highly personal experience, always intertwined with other family and work roles, relationships and demands.

Individuals and families want choices about care options – particularly, but not limited to the home setting. With changing expectations about the balance of work, leisure and family life at different points in people's lives, individual capacity to care and to continue to contribute to community life becomes an issue for employers, government and families. The ageing population in Australia and its impact on Carer demographics will be catalysts for policy change in supporting Carers. Greater collaboration amongst community sector will be critical

to address the needs of Carers, care recipients and the whole family unit.

Our future focus will be on changing the health and community care systems so they can be more responsive to the needs of Carers and the people they support. We will have succeeded when specialist Carer services are no longer needed – that is, when mainstream services are responding in a holistic way to people needing care and the people around them, paid and unpaid, who are sharing the care. Carers have received greater attention in recent years. However their need for understanding, recognition and support remains a pressing community issue. Family Carers are the backbone of community care provision. They will be a diminishing resource unless we address the factors that make caring a difficult choice and a hard experience – until we see caring as a shared responsibility.

We will work in partnership with Carers Australia and the network of Carer Associations to influence positive change in the Commonwealth's continued investment in holistic Carer support and services that reach those in need. We will also work hard in partnership with our members and the ACT Government to ensure Carers in the ACT do not fall through gaps between Commonwealth and ACT Government funded initiatives.



Key Result Area	Strategic Objective	Strategies in next 3 years	How will we measure achievements
<b>1. Provide quality Carer/family focused services that are sensitive and responsive to needs</b>	<i>More caring families have access to quality services and support options that meet their varying needs throughout caring lifespan.</i>	Carer services are regularly reviewed and monitored. Services are designed and delivered to ensure they are flexible, innovative and responsive to meet increased and complex needs of caring families.	80% of Carers who use our services are satisfied that our response is appropriate and timely.
		Proactive planning to improve access and information services and support for Carers including the transient ACT population.	Evidence of increased number of Carers accessing services or support.
		That Carers ACT engages a consistent approach to internal and external referral pathways for caring families.	That number of internal and external referrals are measured and increase.

Key Result Area	Strategic Objective	Strategies in next 3 years	How will we measure achievements
2. Influence community support for Carers	<i>Increased government, community and corporate understanding and support for Carers.</i>	Expand our engagement with opinion leaders, corporate decision makers and media.	Increased support from government and corporate sector.
		Carer issues/need priorities are communicated through contemporary and effective communication strategies and practices.	That communications activities and impact are measured.
		Expand membership base to build stronger voice for and with Carers.	That membership numbers increase and include a diverse range of members.
		Build our reputation as the expert voice 'with and for' Carers.	Increased recognition and engagement by governments, community sector and media.

Key Result Area	Strategic Objective	Strategies in next 3 years	How will we measure achievements
<p><b>3. Provide advocacy, representation and policy development.</b></p>	<p><i>That Carers ACT leads change to achieve improved caring and support choices and models – in partnership with Carers.</i></p>	<p>Increase Carers’ capacity and opportunities to participate in active and supported representation.</p> <p>Our policy and systemic Carer need priorities are supported by data and research evidence.</p> <p>Advocate for equity and sustainable support for diverse Carer populations.</p>	<p>Increased number of opportunities and participation of Carers in representation work.</p> <p>Evidence is rigorous and collected through ongoing active feedback and evaluation from Carers.</p> <p>Increased dialogue with government and collecting evidence of responses.</p>

Key Result Area	Strategic Objective	Strategies in next 3 years	How will we measure achievements
4. Operate a sustainable, accountable and transparent organisation.	<i>To build resources and skills to meet growing and changing needs of Carers.</i>	Board and staff are sufficiently skilled and resourced to deliver within a quality framework and to manage change and growth.	Board and staff are satisfied that sufficient resources are available to meet changing needs and growth.
		We invest in developing opportunities and supporting our staff and volunteers.	80% of staff and volunteers feel supported and valued.
		Organisational performance meets National Network's good practice framework.	80% compliance of the Carer Network's Good Practice Guide – as measured by independent audit.
		That the work of Carers ACT contributes to improved outcomes for family Carers in the ACT.	80% of Carers supported by Carers ACT are satisfied that support has led to improved outcomes in their caring situation.

Carers ACT would like to thank and recognise ongoing funding support from our funding partners:

Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing

Disability ACT

Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Home and Community Care

Mental Health ACT

G.E Shaw

