

CONSULTATION DRAFT

# National Carer Strategy

## Implementation Plan

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July 2012



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**Ministers' Foreword**

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### Overview

The National Carer Strategy is the second element of the National Carer Recognition Framework (the framework). The first element of the framework is the Government's acknowledgement and recognition of the invaluable contribution made by carers through the *Carer Recognition Act 2010*.

The framework recognises that carers are family members, friends, relatives, siblings or neighbours who provide personal care, support and assistance to people with disability, medical condition (including terminal or chronic illness), mental illness, or frailty due to age.

The National Carer Strategy is centred on a vision of an Australian community that values and respects carers and provides them with the rights, choices, opportunities and capabilities to participate in economic, social and community life.

The six priority areas of the National Carer Strategy aim to respond to the diverse and changing needs of carers with services and supports that are coordinated, flexible, appropriate, affordable, inclusive and sustainable. The six priority areas are:

#### **Priority 1 - Recognition and Respect**

Carers are recognised, valued, respected and have their rights protected.

#### **Priority 2 - Information and Access**

Carers have access to appropriate and timely information which makes it easier for them to get support.

#### **Priority 3 - Economic Security**

Carers have economic security and opportunities to participate in paid work.

#### **Priority 4 - Services for Carers**

Carers are supported with appropriate, timely and accessible services.

#### **Priority 5 - Education and Training**

Carers have skills to undertake their role and opportunities to participate in formal education and training.

#### **Priority 6 - Health and Wellbeing**

The health and wellbeing of carers and their capacity to participate in social and community life is improved.

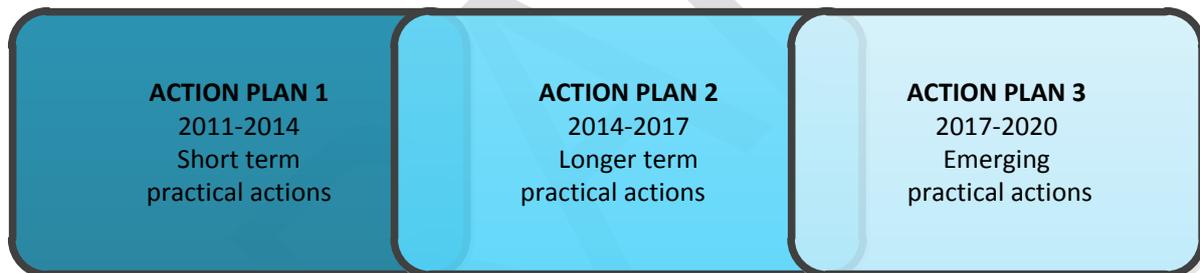
## Implementing the National Carer Strategy

The National Carer Strategy made it clear that more work was needed to put the six priority areas into action. The tasks in the first year of operation were to commence the rollout of the \$60 million in new investments and to develop an Implementation Plan for the life of the Strategy.

This document outlines how the National Carer Strategy will be implemented, including an explanation of:

- How the National Carer Strategy links in with reform agendas occurring across the service and support systems impacting on carers;
- Who will be responsible for implementing the plan;
- How stakeholders were engaged in the development of the plan and will be engaged in the future; and
- How the National Carer Strategy will be monitored, evaluated and reported on.

The implementation approach is structured around three Action Plans which, over time, will drive the change needed to provide carers with the rights, choices, opportunities and capabilities to participate in work, family and community life.



### Action Plan 1 (2011-2014) – short term practical actions

The first Action Plan lists short term tangible actions for areas the Government identified it would do next in the National Carer Strategy. It focuses on:

- Practical actions that will make a difference to carers and the people they care for without making major changes to service systems; and
- Influencing actions that should be undertaken to ensure carers' needs are addressed in broader reforms to disability, mental health, aged care and health services.

The first Action Plan forms a companion document to this Implementation Plan.

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### **Action Plan 2 (2014-2017) – longer term practical actions**

The second Action Plan will involve identifying longer term practical actions that build on the success of actions undertaken as part of plan one. Actions for this plan will be identified in 2014. This phase will also focus on areas where support could be improved for carers that fall outside of the scope of reforms to disability, mental health, aged care and health services. In the second Action Plan, reform agendas and policy directions will be revisited if required.

### **Action Plan 3 (2017- 2020) – emerging actions**

The third Action Plan will involve sustaining effort on longer term practical actions that have been successful as part of the second Action Plan. Actions for this plan will be identified in 2017. This plan will focus on policy directions that build on actions from Plans one and two and/or will identify emerging policy issues that need practical responses.

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### Linking with Reform Agendas

The National Carer Strategy is building on reforms occurring across the Australian, state and territory governments' service and support systems impacting on carers.

Carers are central to reforms to disability, mental health and aged care services because the role of informal carers is critical to sustaining these care support systems. In many ways, addressing the care and support needs of the person being cared for will fulfil the vision of the National Carer Strategy. However, direct support for carers themselves is also important, particularly as they are commencing, undertaking or ending the caring role, to give carers choices and the opportunity to participate in work, family and social life to the fullest extent.

Reforms to service and support systems impacting on carers will contribute to achieving the vision of the National Carer Strategy. The directions of these reforms will also influence actions to be undertaken as part of the first Action Plan (2011-2014).

The National Carer Strategy also has a role in ensuring these reforms support the vision and priority areas of the Strategy. In particular, it is important to ensure that reforms to carer support programs across the service and support systems are complementary and do not create gaps or disadvantage carer groups.

The first Action Plan (2011-2014) – a companion to this document – identifies “influencing actions” and sets out what needs to happen within these reforms to address the needs of carers. The actions reflect that carers access services from different parts of the service system, meaning that carers require information and service models to be complementary.

The current status of key disability, mental health and aged care reform agendas, which link to the National Carer Strategy, are outlined below:

#### Disability Reforms

##### National Disability Strategy

The National Disability Strategy, endorsed by all Australian Governments in February 2011, provides the ten year national policy framework to drive change across mainstream policies, programs, services and infrastructure so that people with disability can participate as equal citizens.

The National Disability Strategy has six outcome areas. These are: inclusive and accessible communities; rights protection, justice and legislation; economic security; personal and community support; learning and skills; and health and wellbeing.

Outcome four explicitly recognises that “families and carers need to be acknowledged and supported” and highlights this could be achieved by undertaking further work to promote and sustain community support networks which provide information and support for carers. This work will complement the information and access and support for carers priorities in the National Carer Strategy.

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### National Disability Insurance Scheme

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is a once in a generation opportunity to change the way we support people with disability, their families and carers. The scheme will provide people with disability, their families and carers, with certainty that their loved ones will receive the individualised care and support they need over their lifetime.

The Productivity Commission report on *Disability Care and Support* states that a goal of a National Disability Insurance Scheme is to relieve the stress on informal carers and provide adequate support to aid them in their role. The report acknowledges that no scheme is likely to fund the full costs of care, so natural supports (from carers) will remain an important part of the care and support response. It also acknowledges that for informal carers to continue with their role they will need to be provided with adequate support.

The release of the 2012–13 Federal Budget saw the Government announce a commitment of \$1 billion over four years to start rolling out the first stage of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). This will see an NDIS becoming real for around 10,000 people with significant and permanent disability, and their families and carers in up to four sites around the country. From the middle of 2014, this will increase to around 20,000 people – a full year ahead of the timetable set out by the Productivity Commission.

An essential part of the design of an NDIS is the advice of experts with lived experience – people with disability, their families and carers, disability care workers, service providers and representative organisations and advocates. To ensure these experts are involved, we have established the NDIS Advisory Group and expert groups on the national approach to control and choice, eligibility and assessment, quality safeguards and standards and the disability workforce and sector capacity to help advise the Government on these key design elements of the scheme.

Carers will benefit from many of the design elements in an NDIS, including a focus on client choice and control, local area coordinators, and the quality and safety framework. The adoption of a nationally consistent quality framework will ensure people with a disability and their families and carers receive high quality supports and services. A gateway service will respond to the enquiries of people with disability, their families and carers through information provision, referrals and linkages to mainstream and community services, as well as to specialist disability services and supports.

Local Area Coordinators (LACs) will be of critical importance to people with disability and their families and carers and the first stage of an NDIS will include LAC's to work with people with disability to develop an individual plan, monitor their individual plans and ensure they are fully included in their communities. LACs will also work with people with disability to enable individual choice and control.

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The Government is also committing \$122.6 million over four years to build workforce skills and assist service providers to transition to the new Scheme. This includes adapting their approach to business and service provision to new ways of doing things under a National Disability Insurance Scheme where people with disability have more control and choice. It will also include training for the disability sector to transition to a business model.

The Government has also announced funding for a Practical Design Fund will provide the opportunity for organisations to undertake work which will both contribute to the development of and implementation strategies for the Scheme, by showing how to prepare disability sector organisations and people with disability and their carers for significant change in the sector. The Government will also provide \$10 million in 2012–13 to support initiatives that would identify practical ways to prepare people with disability and their carers, the disability sector and workforce to transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

### National Disability Agreement

The National Disability Agreement commenced on 1 January 2009 and provides the framework for the provision of government support for people with disability by all governments. The Agreement has paved the way for significant reform of the disability service system and ensures new investment in the existing state-based support system as we go about the broader reforms envisaged under a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

From 1 January 2009 to 30 June 2015, the Australian Government will be providing around \$7.6 billion in funding to the state and territory governments for increased and improved specialist disability services such as supported accommodation, targeted support and respite. This represents a doubling of Australian Government funding from 2006-07.

Key reforms under the National Disability Agreement will contribute towards a number of the priority areas in the National Carer Strategy. These include:

- Responding to the needs of older carers;
- Population Benchmarking for Disability Services, including progressing the development of a benchmark for respite services;
- Service Planning and Strategies to simplify access, including ensuring people with disability, their families and carers are referred to the most appropriate disability services and supports;
- Early Intervention and Prevention, Lifelong Planning and Increasing Independence and Social Participation strategies; and
- The National Companion Card Scheme that enables people with disability to participate at venues and activities without incurring the cost of a second ticket for their companion.

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### Mental Health Reforms

The Government is committed to building a better mental health system that will support people with mental illness, their families and carers.

The Fourth National Mental Health Plan was endorsed by all governments in 2009 and provides a basis for governments to advance mental health activities in a more integrated way, recognising that many areas across government can contribute to better outcomes for people living with mental illness. The plan has five priority areas including: social inclusion and recovery; prevention and early intervention; service access, coordination and continuity of care; quality improvement and innovation; and accountability.

A key action under the priority area 'prevention and early intervention' will be to expand the level and range of support for families and carers of people with mental illness and mental health problems, including children of parents with a mental illness.

In the 2011-2012 Budget, the Government announced a total investment of \$2.2 billion over 5 years in major mental health reforms.

The reforms are intended to improve the mental health care system by raising mental health awareness, earlier detection and intervention for mental illness, improving outcomes for those with severe mental illness, better connections between services, and improvements in governance and reporting frameworks.

This includes developing a Ten Year Roadmap for Mental Health Reforms (the Roadmap). The intent of the Roadmap is to set out a long-term vision and deliver a measurable plan for ongoing reform of the mental health system over the next ten years.

The Roadmap complements the National Carer Strategy. Direction three in the Roadmap 'putting consumers and carers at the heart of services and supports' links with Priority 1 – Recognition and Respect - in the Strategy. It involves ensuring that carers are engaged as partners in care and for carers to be engaged in the design of new programs and measures that impact on them.

As part of the Mental Health Reform package, services for carers and families of people with severe mental illness will be expanded. The expansion of Mental Health Respite: Carer Support Services will enable more services to deliver flexible and responsive services directly to carers and families of people with a mental illness.

### Aged Care Reforms

On 20 April 2012 the Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard MP and the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Social Inclusion and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Mental Health Reform, the Hon Mark Butler MP unveiled a comprehensive 10 year package to reshape aged care. It will build a better, fairer, sustainable and nationally consistent aged care system to meet the social and economic challenges of the nation's ageing population.

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The Government recognises the need for fundamental reform of the aged care system in order to ensure that it continues to provide high quality care and can respond to future challenges. Information on the comprehensive reform package can be found on the “*Living Longer. Living Better.*” website at [www.agedcareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.agedcareaustralia.gov.au).

The Government’s aged care reform package was substantially informed by the Productivity Commission’s inquiry *Caring for Older Australians* and the extensive community and stakeholder consultations that followed the release of the Commission’s final report.

The “*Living Longer. Living Better.*” aged care reform package provides \$3.7 billion over five years. It encompasses a 10 year reform program to create a flexible and seamless system that provides older Australians with more choice, control and easier access to a full range of services, where they want it and when they need it. This aligns with all of the priorities in the National Carer Strategy and acknowledges and recognises that supporting carers is essential to enabling older people to remain living at home longer.

The reforms will be implemented in stages. This will enable consumers and providers to gain early benefits from key changes, while ensuring they have time to adapt and plan ahead for further reform.

The reforms give priority to providing more support and care in the home, better access to residential care, more support for those with dementia and strengthening the aged care workforce.

Key components of the reforms include:

- additional support and care to help older people remain living at home;
- additional help for carers to access respite and other support;
- delivering better residential aged care;
- strengthening the aged care workforce;
- supporting consumers and research;
- better health connections;
- tackling the nation’s dementia epidemic;
- supporting older Australians from diverse backgrounds;
- an Implementation Council to drive the reform package;
- establishing an Aged Care Financing Authority;
- establishing a Gateway to services to assist older Australians in finding information and to better navigate the aged care system;
- streamlined quality regulation; and
- improved powers to handle consumer complaints.

The reforms include funding more respite care and support for carers including:

- expanding both emergency and planned respite care currently funded under the National Respite for Carers Program;
- increasing carer counselling; and
- establishing a network of Carer Support Centres around Australia to provide information, education and training, counselling and appropriate referral to other services for carers.

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Importantly, the reforms also ensure Australia's aged care system is underpinned by fairer and more sustainable financing arrangements. These arrangements reflect a shared commitment to meeting the costs of aged care, protect the most vulnerable in the community and do not involve any changes to the current treatment of the family home.

The Government will provide \$54.8 million over five years to expand and reform carer support services including to:

- Expand both emergency and planned respite care currently funded under the National Respite for Carers Program;
- Increase carer counselling; and
- Establish a network of Carer Support Centres around Australia.

Funding more respite care and counselling support for carers means that an additional 6,500 carers will benefit in 2012-13, rising to nearly 16,000 additional carers by 2015-16. These reforms build on existing Government investments which include:

- A projected more than \$2 billion over the next five years for respite services in the home, in centres, and in aged care homes; and
- More than \$35 million over five years for carer information, support and counselling services.

### National Health Reform Agreement

The National Health Reform Agreement was agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) on 2 August 2011 and builds upon the Heads of Agreement signed at the 13 February 2011 COAG meeting. Under the Agreement the Commonwealth is increasing its contribution to efficient growth funding for hospital services to 45 per cent from 1 July 2014 to 50 per cent from 1 July 2017. An additional \$16.4 billion is being provided by the Commonwealth under this new agreement until 2019-20.

COAG also agreed a revised National Partnership Agreement on Improving Public Hospital Services, under which the Commonwealth will provide a further \$1.8 billion to establish new emergency department and elective surgery targets. An additional \$1.6 billion is being provided to fund the capital and recurrent costs of 1,316 new sub-acute beds or equivalent services. The National Health Reform Agreement sets out the shared intention of the Commonwealth, states and territories' governments to work in partnership to improve health outcomes for all Australians and ensure the sustainability of the Australian health system.

Under the National Health Reform Agreement, the Australian Government is shifting policy and funding responsibility for aged care services from states and territories to a national approach.

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Achieving a more efficient aged care system is currently also being driven by improving integration between hospitals and primary care services with a new 'front end' for aged care. The front end reform supports the development of a nationally consistent aged care service via a single central entry point. It aims to offer improved continuity of care for care recipients, their families and carers.

The reforms under the National Health Reform Agreement align with Priority 2: Information and Access, Priority 4: Services for Carers and Priority 6: Health and Wellbeing in the National Carer Strategy.

The implementation of a new single entry to aged care services is linked to other health reforms including Local Hospital Networks and Medicare Locals.

The \$176 million package of measures that are a part of the National Health and Hospitals Network includes \$58.5 million over four years to deliver new packages of coordinated care to better support up to 25,000 people with severe mental illness being managed in primary care (this is to be delivered through Access to Allied Psychological Services arrangements). Medicare Locals will be the fundholders for the care packages.

The Government has committed a total of \$477 million over four years to establish a national network of Medicare Locals across Australia. The first group of 19 Medicare Locals began operating from 1 July 2011. A further 18 commenced from 1 January 2012, with the remainder commencing on 1 July 2012. In total, there will be a network of 62 Medicare Locals nationwide ensuring people receive locally responsive primary health care. In particular, Medicare Locals will improve local integration of Commonwealth and other mental health services in primary care. They will work with Local Hospital Networks to improve clinical pathways for people with mental health needs.

### Service Delivery Reform

The Department of Human Services is implementing Service Delivery Reform, transforming the way its services are delivered to make it easier and quicker for customers, including people with disability and carers, to access government services so that they have more control and better support and assistance when it is needed. The Service Delivery Reform measures include co-located shopfronts, more mobile and outreach services, case coordination, Local Connections to Work and other support services.

### Governance

The National Carer Strategy comprises the Government's commitment to achieving the overall vision for carers, which has been welcomed by state and territory governments.

#### Australian Government

Ministers across multiple portfolios will provide strategic direction to the Commonwealth Carers Forum and oversee the delivery of the Implementation Plan. The Commonwealth Carers Forum will be responsible for implementing the National Carer Strategy through three year Action Plans. The Commonwealth Carers Forum is led by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and comprises representatives of the Department of Health and Ageing; the Department of Veterans' Affairs; the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations; the Department of Finance and Deregulation; the Department of Human Services; the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education; and the Treasury.

Individual agencies will be accountable for the achievement of practical actions outlined in the three year Action Plans, including monitoring progress and contributing to the development of an annual report. This annual report will be compiled by the lead agency of the Commonwealth Carers Forum, who will also have responsibility for the evaluation arrangements as outlined in the next Section on Stakeholders.

#### National Carer Strategy Implementation Reference Group

An implementation reference group will be formed comprising representatives of peak organisations and key stakeholder groups that focus on carers of people with disability, people with mental illness, people with medical condition and the frail aged. This group will meet with the Carers Forum bi-annually and will be engaged in monitoring the Strategy's progress with the Implementation Plan and the development of the Strategy's second and third year Action Plans. Additional meetings will be held as the need arises during the implementation of the National Carer Strategy.

#### State and Territory Governments

While the National Carer Strategy is the responsibility of the Australian Government, the work of state and territory governments is integral to achieving the overall vision for carers. Each state and territory government has its own strategies, initiatives and action plans that complement the vision. The National Carer Strategy Working Group, a sub-committee of the Disability Policy and Research Working Group, was set up to inform the development of the National Carer Strategy. The National Carer Strategy Working Group includes Australian and state and territory government representatives with disability, mental health and carer expertise. The Working Group will be the mechanism by which the Australian Government will consult with state and territory governments on the implementation of the Strategy and complementary carer activities and issues across government.

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### New South Wales Government (NSW)

New South Wales is implementing the *Carers (Recognition) Act 2012* (the New South Wales Act), which provides clear and strong legislative recognition of carers in New South Wales. The New South Wales Act establishes a comprehensive Carers Charter with 13 principles to recognise and support carers.

The New South Wales Act requires that:

- Government departments and local councils make sure all staff are aware of and understand the Carers Charter;
- Staff in human service agencies reflect the principles of the Charter in their core business activities;
- Government departments and local councils consult with appropriate organisations or bodies that represent carers when developing policies that will impact on carers; and
- Government departments and local councils develop human resource policies following consideration of the Carers Charter.

The New South Wales Act also establishes the New South Wales Carers Advisory Council, to ensure that government has direct access to advice from carers, carers' representatives and others with expertise on carer issues. The majority of Council members are primary carers and they represent diverse caring experiences and different communities across New South Wales. The Council meets three times a year and is chaired by the Minister for Disability Services.

Through a whole of government approach, New South Wales has also developed a range of resources and tools to improve support for young carers in New South Wales, including the booklet 'Identifying and supporting young carers: a guide for service providers'.

The New South Wales Carers Action Plan 2007 – 2012 is being evaluated in 2012.

Information about NSW Government carer initiatives is available at [www.adhc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au).

### Victoria

The Victorian Government is committed to recognising and supporting the role of carers and care relationships, and the following initiatives, strategies, and activities are being undertaken in Victoria that are complementary to the Australian Government's National Carers Strategy:

- The Victorian Families Statement presents a commitment to identifying and addressing challenges in the community and specifically the importance of supporting the role of carers. It acknowledges that caring for older Victorians is more important than it has ever been and demonstrates a commitment to assisting the more vulnerable members of the community, including people with disabilities. The Families Statement also identifies the impact on families of caring for relatives and that carers can have restricted opportunities to study, work and socialise;

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- The Victorian Government has introduced the Carers Recognition Bill 2012 to recognise people in care relationships, including permanent, kinship and foster carers, and people providing support and assistance for someone with a mental or chronic illness, and those supporting ageing parents, the frail aged or a person with a disability. The legislation requires government and funded agencies to consider the principles in the Bill in the conduct of their business and to report annually on the actions they have taken to comply with their obligations under the Act. The Bill will come into effect on 1 July 2012;
- The existing Victorian Charter Supporting People in Care Relationships will be updated to reflect the new legislation and will support implementation of the Bill;
- The Victorian *Disability Act 2006* will be amended to include a reference to carers where families are referred to, at appropriate points, ensuring carers are similarly recognised; and
- Other areas of Government supporting people in care relationships include the Department of Health that manages the state wide Support for Carers of Older People Program including carers of people with dementia, the Home and Community Care Program that supports people in care relationships, and the Mental Health Carer Support Program. The Department of Health also provides funding to Carers Victoria to represent and support all Victorian carers.

Further information is available at <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/carers>

### Queensland

Queensland is implementing their *Carers (Recognition) Act 2008* (the Queensland Act), which sets out requirements for public authorities to recognise and support carers by delivering services to carers and the people they care for through:

- The Carers Charter, which contains 13 principles recognising the significant contribution carers make to the community; and
- The establishment of the Queensland Carers Advisory Council, which advises on matters relating to carers.

Recent amendments to the Queensland Act recognise the valuable contribution of grandparent carers.

Queensland is revising its 2011 Carer Action Plan in line with government's priorities.

### South Australia

South Australia is implementing their *Carers Recognition Act 2005* (the South Australian Act), which requires applicable state government agencies to report annually on actions taken to achieve the requirements of the South Australian Act and the seven principles of the Carers Charter, in the provision of services relevant to carers and the people they care for.

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The South Australian Act aims to:

- Recognise and support carers and their role in the community;
- Enshrine the South Australian Carers Charter in legislation; and
- Require that certain organisations report on the actions taken to reflect the principles of the South Australian Carers Charter in the provision of services relevant to carers and the persons they care for.

The South Australian Act stipulates that applicable government agencies must consult carers, or persons or bodies that represent carers, in policy or program development or strategic or operational planning relevant to carers and the persons they care for. It is also compulsory for government funded disability service providers to submit written evidence of consultation with carers to meet the requirements of the South Australian Act.

The Plan for South Australian Carers 2009, builds on the South Australian Act, the South Australian Carers Charter and Carers Policy. The Plan, developed in consultation with individual carers, carer representative bodies and state government agencies, outlines six objectives based on the core idea of creating opportunity.

The Department for Communities and Social Inclusion, through the Office for Carers hosts the South Australian Carers Reference Group, which consists of carers, community representatives, key State and Commonwealth Government departments and non-government organisations. The Reference Group provides advice to Government on the implementation of the Carers Policy, Carers Charter and the South Australian Act and of issues affecting carers.

In 2011, the South Australian Act was reviewed after the fifth anniversary of its commencement. The review, undertaken by an advisory committee, looked at the operation and effectiveness of the South Australian Act. It is anticipated that the recommendations from this review will inform future work undertaken by the Office for Carers.

The South Australian Act is available at <http://www.sa.gov.au/subject/Community+Support/Carers/Carers'+rights+and+legislation/SA+Carers+Recognition+Act+2005>.

### Western Australia

Western Australia was the first Australian jurisdiction to legislate to recognise and support carers. The *Carers Recognition Act 2004* came into effect on 1 January 2005. The Act requires disability and health departments and their funded organisations to include carers in the assessment, planning, delivery and review of services that affect them. Compliance is reported to Parliament through the Carers Advisory Council. The Act was reviewed in 2008 and recommendations are being considered for implementation.

Some key initiatives that support carers are:

- Comprehensive information for carers and service providers through a central website for carers that includes links to support services; publications about the Carers Recognition Act and its application; and information in newsletters, brochures, websites and interactive media such as Twitter;

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- Recognition of the carer role within high level policy, such as Disability Services Commission's Family and Carer Support Policy Framework; and the draft Mental Health Bill ;
- An annual Consumer Survey includes a specific section for carers of people with disability, enabling them to provide feedback;
- Disability services and supports for carers include Local Area Coordination, construction of five respite facilities, advocacy, and equipment;
- The pilot Young Carers Project delivers training, awareness-raising activities and establishes support networks within the education system;
- Older carers of people with disability are assisted to plan for their futures, and are prioritised by age in the allocation of disability funding;
- Carers are encouraged to participate on boards and committees and to assume leadership roles within their local communities;
- A school education program promotes mental health and includes content on the importance of carers for people with mental illness;
- The 'Stepping out of the Shadows' package for culturally and linguistically diverse communities has practical ways for handling mental health issues;
- The Apache Energy LINC (liaising, informing and networking for carers) program at Princess Margaret Hospital supports the families and carers of children with complex medical needs;
- Services by funded health organisations include a Carer/Consumer Participation Framework to ensure that carers and consumers are involved in decision making, service planning, service design, policy development and quality improvement.

The Western Australian Act is available at:

<http://www.communities.wa.gov.au/serviceareas/carers/Pages/CarersRecognitionAct.aspx>

### Tasmania

The provision of informal and unpaid care is a significant issue for Tasmania which has the fastest ageing population in Australia. As the population of Tasmania matures, demand for informal care is projected to increase rapidly, outstripping the supply of informal carers.

Tasmania does not currently have any specific legislation related to carers or carer support. In 2011, in recognition of the invaluable contribution of carers to the people for whom they care and the general community, the Minister for Human Services requested background information and a recommendation on the potential development of Tasmanian carer specific legislation to provide the necessary recognition of carers in Tasmania.

A review of carer related actions from other Australian jurisdictions identified a number of possible options, including legislation development, which could be considered by the Tasmanian government to recognise and support Tasmanian carers.

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Analysis suggested that legislation alone would not produce the cultural change desired, so on 18 October 2011, the Hon Cassandra O'Connor MP, Minister for Human Services, approved the initiation of a Tasmanian Carer Recognition and Support Framework to increase recognition of carers, improve services and support to carers, and to use carers' care provision experience in planning processes and service delivery.

The outcomes for the project will be:

- Improved understanding and recognition that carers' rights and needs are distinct from the care recipients;
- Improved services and supports to carers; and
- Increased participation of carers in decisions that may have an impact on their personal circumstances and their caring role.

The project will deliver a: whole-of-government Carer Policy that includes a definition of 'carer'; a five-year Action Plan; amended Legislation (minor amendments to include a definition of 'carer' in existing legislations that have references to carers); and an ongoing Monitoring Body.

### Australian Capital Territory

In June 2011, the Australian Capital Territory Minister for Community Services, Ms Joy Burch MLA, noted and welcomed the vision, aim and priority areas of the National Carer Strategy and identified work already underway in the Australian Capital Territory that complements the National Carer Strategy. In particular, Minister Burch identified two main bodies of work in relation to carers: the development of the Australian Capital Territory Carers Charter; and Future Directions: Towards Challenge 2014.

On 19 October 2011, the Australian Capital Territory Carers Charter was launched. The Charter is intended to improve the circumstances of carers by raising community awareness and promoting the carer role in service delivery.

The Charter consists of five core principles. Broadly, these focus on ensuring that carers are engaged, supported and able to achieve a quality of life that is in line with community standards.

The Charter complements existing documents supporting carers in the Australian Capital Territory, such as the Caring for Carers Policy (2003) and the Foster Carers and Kinship Carers Guide (2010).

The ACT Carers Charter is available at:

[http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/disability\\_act/family\\_friends\\_and\\_carers](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/disability_act/family_friends_and_carers).

### Northern Territory

The role, recognition and needs of carers in the Northern Territory have been incorporated in overarching whole-of-government strategic directions and are underpinned by strong legislative and practice frameworks.

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Territory 2030, the 20 year strategic plan for the Northern Territory includes objectives and targets addressing the health, wellbeing, resilience and financial security of carers and recognising caring as a shared responsibility of family, community and government. Key actions of the strategy aim to improve support services to assist carers in maintaining their roles. Updates against the Territory 2030 objectives are provided by government on a bi-annual basis and a score card or progress rating against actions is provided every two years. Territory 2030 undergoes a complete review every five years where there are opportunities to reassess priorities and to align the plan to emerging territory and national level strategies.

The Northern Territory's *Carers Recognition Act 2006* (the Northern Territory Act), including the Northern Territory Carers Charter (the Northern Territory Charter), provides the legislative basis to ensure the needs and role of carers are adequately recognised and supported in the Northern Territory. The principles of the Northern Territory Charter complement the broader principles of the Statement for Australia's Carers, provided under the Commonwealth *Carer Recognition Act 2010*. The Northern Territory Act requires relevant organisations to report annually against the actions taken to reflect the principles of the Northern Territory Charter in providing relevant services.

The Northern Territory legislative framework for carers is further supported by provision of the Northern Territory *Mental Health and Related Service Act* and the Northern Territory *Disability Services Act*. The *Mental Health and Related Services Act* addresses recognition of primary carers, and carers' rights, particularly in reference to receiving information regarding admissions, treatment and care. The *Disability Services Act* focuses on the rights and outcomes for people with disability and the requirements of service providers and researchers.

The Northern Territory Act is available at:

<http://notes.nt.gov.au/dcm/legislat/legislat.nsf/d989974724db65b1482561cf0017cbd2/1e9ab07c292ba6a069257635000ab7ec?OpenDocument>.

## Stakeholders

In late 2010, formal consultations were undertaken with carers, peak organisations, advocates and service providers in the development of the Strategy. Following the release of the Strategy in August 2011, the Department of Families, Housing, Communities Services and Indigenous Affairs has engaged with stakeholders to inform development of the Implementation Plan and first Action Plan (2011-2014).

Stakeholders engaged during this process include:

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Based on this feedback, the final draft of the Implementation Plan and first Action Plan (2011-14) was developed.

## Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

The Government, through the Commonwealth Carers Forum, will be responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the success of the National Carer Strategy.

The performance monitoring, reporting and evaluation activities will capture relevant information that will assess the contribution of the National Carer Strategy towards achieving the broader outcome that carers in Australia are valued and respected in society and have rights, choices, opportunities and capabilities to participate in economic, social and community life.

The National Carer Strategy implementation approach will focus on three year Action Plans where policy directions will be reviewed at key points to take into consideration major reforms and emerging issues.

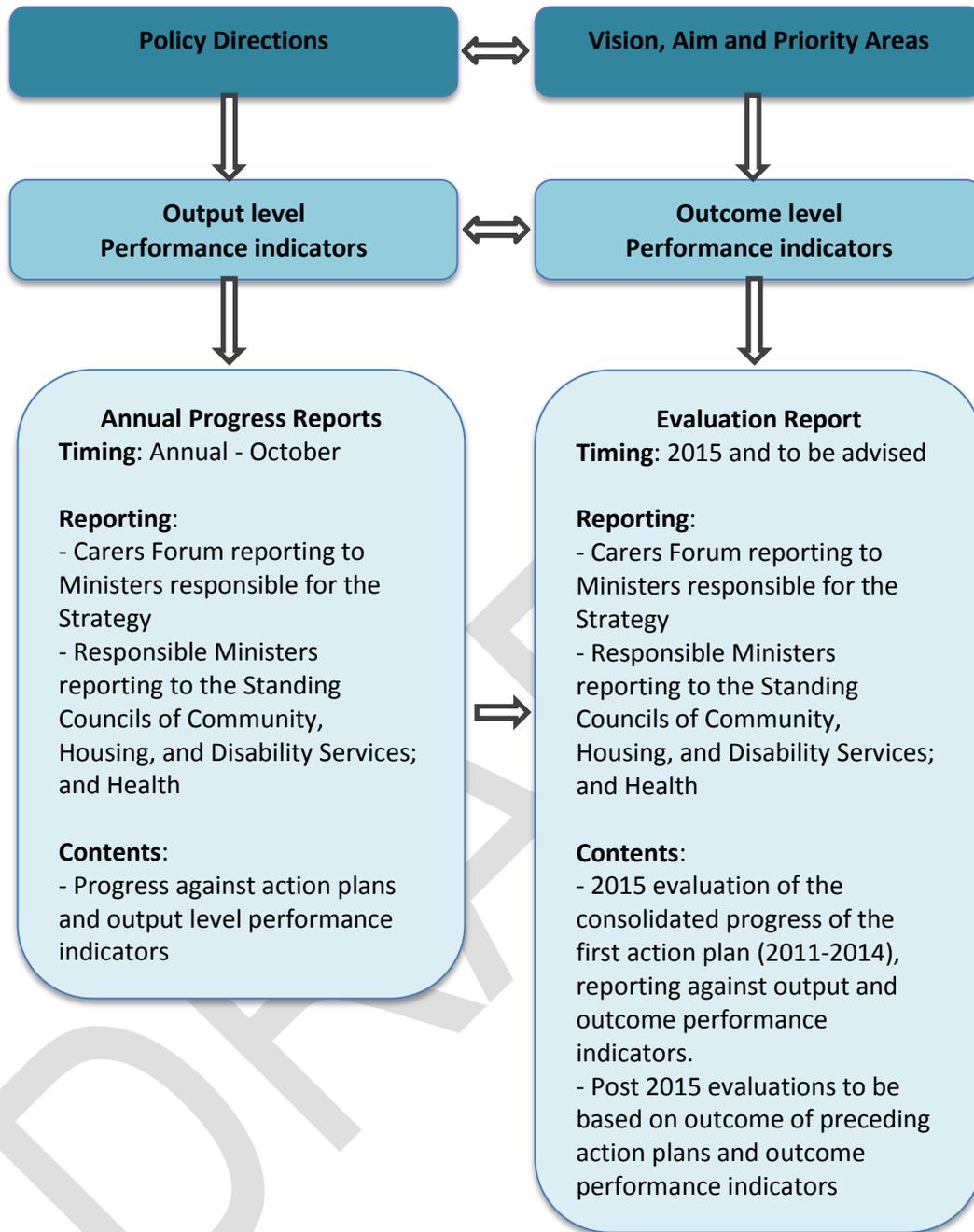
### Monitoring

The monitoring of the progress of the priorities and individual actions under the National Carer Strategy will be measured by performance indicators at two levels:

- **Outcome level performance indicators** will form the basis of how the Government's achievements against the Strategy's priority areas will be measured. Outcome performance indicators will be based on population level data, largely from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers.
- **Output level performance indicators** will form the basis of how the Government's achievements will be measured against each of the Action Plans. They will show what the Government has produced to meet outcomes. The output level performance indicators for the first year Action Plan (2011-2014) will be outlined in the first annual progress report.

The performance indicators will form the basis of two aligned and interrelated reporting and evaluation processes, consisting of annual progress reports and evaluation reports. The following diagram sets out these arrangements.

CONSULTATION DRAFT



**Annual Progress Reporting**

The Australian Government will report to the Council of Australian Governments’ Standing Council of Community, Housing, Disability and Community Services, and the Standing Council of Health with annual progress reports tabled by October each year. The annual progress reports will be made publicly available following this process.

## CONSULTATION DRAFT

The annual progress reports will track output level indicator data and progress against the relevant actions under the Strategy. Output indicators are a useful measure of the actions that will produce positive effects on outcomes. Output indicators can be collected more frequently and demonstrate what the Government is doing to improve outcomes for carers. The first annual progress report will be released during Carers Week 2012.

### Evaluation

An evaluation report will track longer term progress in achieving outcomes across the Strategy. The first report will be produced in 2015, and then on a timetable agreed to by the Commonwealth Carers Forum. This report will pull together findings of the annual reports to date and report on achievements against outcome level performance indicators.

Outcome level performance indicators will be used to measure progress against the six priority areas of the National Carer Strategy. The outcome indicators will be based on the national data currently available in the Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers.

In December 2010, Australian Government and state and territory Disability Ministers agreed to provide funding to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers to enhance the quality, relevance and scope of the data collected.

Enhancements were made to the 2009 Survey through a combination of improved sample design and increased sample size. Enhanced data was also collected on demography, unmet demand for disability services, carers, social inclusion and labour force participation. The Australian Bureau of Statistics is also making changes to the 2012 Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers, including improvements in the collection of carer data.

The outcome indicators selected to measure progress of the National Carer Strategy are based on national data available at the release of this Implementation Plan. Given the ongoing improvements in the collection of disability and carer data, the outcome indicators will need to be dynamic to evolve with ongoing policy reforms and improvements in data availability.

The evaluation reports will examine the consolidated progress in delivering the first Action Plan and reporting against outcome and output performance indicators. Future evaluation reports will examine the demonstrable effects of the National Carer Strategy actions on the defined outcomes, and focus on measuring the outcomes of preceding Action Plans. Stakeholders listed above will be consulted on the evaluation of the Strategy.

The table below sets out the Outcome Indicator arrangements for the National Carer Strategy. It should be noted that these indicators are only indicative at this stage. A comprehensive Evaluation Framework will be developed before the Evaluation is undertaken in 2015. At that time, more relevant Outcome Indicators may be available.

## CONSULTATION DRAFT

Priority Area	Outcome	Outcome Indicator	Performance Measure	Data Source
<b>Priority 1 - Recognition and Respect</b>	Carers are recognised, valued, respected and have their rights protected	The recognition of carers, and understanding of the caring role, is improved	Proportion of primary carers of people with disability who feel satisfied due to their caring role	Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers
<b>Priority 2 - Information and Access</b>	Carers have access to appropriate and timely information which makes it easier for them to get support	Carers' access to appropriate and timely information and services is improved	Proportion of primary carers who reported their unmet sources of support was more courses or training required	Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers
<b>Priority 3 - Economic Security</b>	Carers have economic security and opportunities to participate in paid work	Increased economic security and labour force participation of carers	Proportion of all carers aged 20-64 years who are participating in the labour force compared to non-carers aged 20-64 years	Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers
			Proportion of all carers in households in the lowest equivalised gross household income quintile compared to non-carers	Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers
<b>Priority 4 - Services for Carers</b>	Carers are supported with appropriate, timely and accessible services	An increase in carers supported with appropriate, timely and accessible services	The proportion of primary carers who report not needing assistance or further assistance to care for their main recipient of care	Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers
			The proportion of primary carers who report receiving assistance to care for main recipient of carer	Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers
<b>Priority 5 – Education and Training</b>	Carers have skills to undertake their role and opportunities to participate in formal education and training	An increase in the percentage of carers who receive support/training in their caring role and participate in formal education and training	The proportion of all carers aged 15-24 years engaged in education	Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers
			Proportion of all carers aged 15-64 years engaged in education	Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers
			Proportion of all carers aged 18-24 years who have completed Yr 12 or Certificate II or above compared to non-carers aged 18-24 years	Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers
<b>Priority 6 – Health and Wellbeing</b>	The health and wellbeing of carers and their capacity to participate in social and community life is improved	An increase in the reported health and wellbeing of carers and capacity to participate in the community	Proportion of primary carers who do not experience negative impacts on their wellbeing due to their caring role	Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers
			Proportion of primary carers who participate in social and community activities	Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers