

Annual Report 2020-2021



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Our Work

Who we support

A carer is a family member or friend who provides assistance with the tasks of daily living to someone who lives with a disability, a medical condition (including a terminal or chronic illness), a mental illness or is frail and aged.

A carer's role can include assisting with daily living activities such as housework, transport, health care, shopping, and meals, reading and writing, emotional and mental support, and personal care.

Why we support

Carers ACT's purpose is to support, connect and empower carers to maintain their caring role and personal wellbeing.

As a trusted partner in care, we aim to enable carers to undertake their role with capacity and capability whilst also enabling carers to participate in everyday activities such as employment, education, and social activities by providing a range of integrated services and supports.

We are the voice for carers in the ACT and work with industry and government to make Canberra a more carer-friendly community.



We are also a proud member of the National Network of Carer Associations, working in partnership to promote awareness of carers and the issues related to the caring role.

Foreword

Carers play a vital role in creating a more inclusive, compassionate and kind community.

As the Minister responsible for Carers, I continue to be in awe of carers' resilience and skills. They care for people in different and creative ways so more people are safe and have their wellbeing needs supported. Carers have been instrumental in the ACT's social and health response to the COVID-19 pandemic and have stepped up to ensure Canberrans most in need have access to support.

Carers ACT has been fiercely advocating for carers and their needs. I thank Carers ACT for

their ongoing leadership in service delivery, engagement with government and advocacy to raise public awareness of carers' needs and issues. Chief Executive Officer Lisa Kelly has remained passionate and committed to advocating for carers throughout the pandemic. Her dedication is a testament to the support carers provide for our communities.

I want to thank Carers ACT for their work over the past year to progress the ACT Carers Strategy and assist in the development of the Carers Recognition Bill. I look forward to their continued efforts to co-design carers policy and initiatives in the ACT over the coming years, and I will continue to work for improved support to carers in our community. They are doing a fantastic job supporting our carers and advocating for them to the ACT Government.

Thank you

Emma Davidson

Minister for Justice Health
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Disability
Assistant Minister for Seniors, Veterans,
Families and Community Services
Greens MLA for Murrumbidgee



CEO Report

The 2021 Financial Year can be summarized as a year of adaptation and change.

Having come through the first wave of the COVID-19 outbreak in early 2020, the year started with much uncertainty and trepidation. As a community we adjusted to a world changed by the pandemic and little did we know that we were far from over the impact and spread of COVID. Carers continued to carry the concern and threat of COVID on the health and wellbeing of their family and friends. For many carers, COVID exacerbated their isolation, drained their finances, increased their worry and anxiety, and impacted their general health. For many

carers, COVID did not end when the lockdowns and restrictions within the ACT during 2020 were relaxed. I am proud of the advocacy Carers ACT has undertaken over the year to raise concerns about the health and wellbeing of carers, to obtain funding to support carers to commence their recovery from COVID, and to call on the community to acknowledge the role carers played in COVID by protecting and caring for those who were most vulnerable. In 2021 Carers ACT lived our purpose of supporting, connecting, and empowering carers to maintain their role and wellbeing and we saw our vision of being a trusted partner in care, in action.

The year was not only about COVID, pandemics and recovery (or as it turns out, waiting for the next wave). This year also saw the conclusion of the Royal Commission into Aged Care, and confirmation of the stories and experiences of many aged carers of how

shocking, disgraceful, and lacking our system of aged care is. The Commission Report highlighted the valuable role carers play in supporting people who are frail aged, whilst condemning some of the practices of the organisations and systems designed to provide support. Carers ACT welcomes the report and looks forward to seeing change and a revolution in the way in which we, as a community, value and support people who are aged and the family members and friends who care for them. We embrace the challenges that these changes present to the organisation as a provider of in-home aged and carer supports and look forward to shaping our programs to continue to provide exemplary care. I am proud of the Aged Care



supports that we provide and am touched by the positive impact that they make in the lives of carers and aged people.

We continued to expand our service offerings to support the growing number of carers of frail aged people this year. We opened our second respite cottage, Naragana-Wali, in Isaacs. The name is a traditional Ngunnawal term meaning “Alive, Wellbeing and Coming Together” which aptly describes the feel and purpose of the cottage. We secured funding to establish a range of social support groups for people who are aged from culturally diverse backgrounds. As a result, we are happy to welcome and support our Indian, Sri Lankan and Muslim groups to meet, connect and support each other. We look forward to adding more groups in the future.

In partnership with Palliative Care ACT, we helped to realise their vision of a respite home for people requiring palliative care and their carers. In January we opened Leo’s Place as a space of rest and tranquility that provides non-clinical respite care to people with life limiting illness. The service has been a success and having now completed its establishment period we will continue to support its continued achievements whilst handing the operations over to Palliative Care ACT. It was a privilege to be involved in establishing this much needed service in the ACT.

Carers ACT in partnership with Shaw Building Group, was proud to sponsor a NAIDOC Award this year. It was tremendously rewarding to be able to recognise the value and worth that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders contribute to our community and culture. Shaw Building Group sponsored the Aboriginal Apprentice of the Year and proudly presented the award to a young woman (making it even more special). Together, Carers ACT and Shaw Building Group, see the sponsorship of the NAIDOC awards as a way of demonstrating reconciliation and our support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT. We look forward to continuing this as a new tradition.

In April 2020 amongst the first wave of the COVID pandemic we commenced service delivery under the new Carer Gateway service model. Over the past 12 months we have continued to work to implement the new programs under the Carer Gateway. We are really pleased to start seeing some longer-term positive impacts for carers who have been supported under this program and we will continue to work to refine the service model to ensure that the needs of carers are central to the program.

Our advocacy services remain strong as we continue to push for carers voices to be central to the work of government, business, and community. We proudly stood beside Suzanne Orr MLA as she drafted and tabled

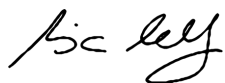
the first ACT Carers Recognition Act. This piece of legislation finally cements the recognition and acknowledgement of carers in law and outlines the principles by which services, programs and government bodies should treat carers. This is a game changer for carers in the ACT as it provides a guarantee that they will be seen and heard in government and service policy and program development. It is a significant step towards carers being seen and valued as equal partners in care.

This year we launched the new Mental Health Carer Navigation Website. As the mental health sector becomes more and more complex, carers are often left confused, frustrated, and despondent about helping the person they care for access and engage in the plethora of services and supports available. Traditionally we have provided support for this through a hard copy navigation guide which, while well received, is often out of date even before the print run is complete. This year we have worked hard to put the information online in a way that is engaging and user friendly. The new website aims to build confidence and competency in carers to navigate the system and obtain the supports they need for the person they care for.

In 2022 we look forward to celebrating our 30th Anniversary. This is a significant milestone as it marks the work of the numerous people who have worked to keep

carers supported and recognised over the years. Carers ACT started from a group of carers connecting with each other more than 30 years ago. From there we have become the leading provider of carer supports in the ACT and continue to hold carers central to everything we do. We are hoping to conduct several anniversary activities during the year to mark the occasion.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Carers ACT Board Members for their time, guidance, and wisdom. To the staff of Carers ACT, I thank you for your passion, commitment, dedication, and the empathetic way you support and fight for carers every day. To the many carers I have spoken to in the past 12 months, thank you from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to share part of your journey, I am humbled and privileged to have heard your story, shared your pain and joy, witnessed your dedication, and stood beside you in your fight. Thank you for all that you do in your family and the community, and for showing me every day what love looks like.



Lisa Kelly
Chief Executive Officer



Our Strategic Imperatives

Carers ACT is a trusted partner in caring

Partnership Broker

- Partner with carers to be a trusted source of information and connection
- Drive partnerships with key influencers that build awareness and recognition of carers
- Collaborate with others in the community to connect carers to information, support and services.
- Collaborate with the National Network and Carers Australia to form a trusted partner for carers and government nationally.

Responsible Decision Maker

- Implement business processes and governance that allows the organisation to respond effectively and efficiently to the changing environment.
- Ensure the organisation remains viable and capable of delivering services of value to carers.
- Maintain accreditation and identity as a quality service provider.
- Actively pursue opportunities that enables our purpose and mission

Key Influencer

- Use our expertise and sphere of influence to raise awareness, affect policy and enhance services for carers.
- Ensure the voices of carers are heard in the formation of policy.
- Influence the implementation of the ACT Carers Strategy.
- Partner with carers to influence the services and systems they interact with and that impact the caring role

Enabler

- Collaborate to ensure that carers are able to access quality services in the community that respond to and meet their needs.
- Provide services that have a positive impact on carers and enables them to continue in their caring role.
- Assist carers to navigate through service systems to ensure they can access the services and supports that are available to them and the person they care for.

Key Strategic Achievements

2020-2021

Partnership Broker

- Collaborated with Palliative Care ACT to open the first non-clinical respite care cottage specifically for people with life limiting illness
- Supported Shaw Building Group to generate their highest donation to Carers ACT thus far
- Partnered with Office for Disability, Community Connections, Community Options and AFI to implement a COVID Communication Strategy for people with disability and carers
- We partnered with Capital Health Network to update the ACT Carer Needs Assessment

Key Influencer

- First ACT Carer Recognition Act was tabled at the Legislative Assembly to pass a law that recognises and acknowledges the contribution of carers.
- Completed all of the actions allocated to Carers ACT under the ACT Carers Strategy
- Developed a Mental Health Recovery Model incorporating the carer as a key element to recovery
- Participated in the review of the Out of Home Care Strategy
- We ensured a carer voice and perspective in decision making relating to COVID

Enabler

- Secured additional aged care funding that enabled us to develop social support groups for people who are frail aged from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Implemented a Health Pathway Program to facilitate referrals to Carers ACT from GPs
- Provided more than 150 young carers with COVID recovery grants
- Opened our second respite cottage for people who are frail aged
- Piloted a program that provided support to mature aged carers to connect to the NDIS
- Delivered a suite of wellbeing programs to more than 150 carers

Responsible Decision Maker

- Implemented an Accountability Framework to help the organisation achieve excellence
- Achieved an overall staff satisfaction rating of 91% with an overall satisfaction with the organisation of 90% and a satisfaction level of 93% for the way the organisation responded to the COVID outbreak.
- Passed accreditation under the NDIS Standards, QIC Health and Community Services Standards, Aged Care Standards and ACT Secure Local Jobs framework.
- Created a new specialised client record management system

Service Delivery Snapshot

1,344



carers were able to share and connect with other carers in more than **210 educational, social and wellbeing group activities**.

305



carers learned strategies to maintain their wellbeing and build resilience through **76 wellbeing sessions**.

335



carers enhanced their wellbeing through our **social respite program activities** such as craft groups, lunches, and art groups.

80



carers were able to have a break from their caring role, enhance their wellbeing and make social connections by attending **4 Carer Wellbeing retreats**.

84



carers were able to take a break with the aged person they care for during **6 ACT Walking the Journey Together Retreats**.

75



carers were able to take a break with the aged person they care for during **4 Illawarra Walking the Journey Together Retreats**.

191



carers were supported through **689 counselling sessions** and **10 therapeutic group sessions**.

585



carers attended **73 educational workshops** which equipped them with vital skills and knowledge, boosted their confidence, and strengthened their capacity to care.

1,500



carers in the ACT were provided carer support and planning, respite care, information, and links to local services.

768



carers of people with mental health conditions were provided relevant information through our **Mental Health Carers Voice E-Bulletin**.

54



carers were able to have a vital break from caring through **Deakin Cottage**.

30



carers attended **weekly social support groups** for our aged Indian and Sri-Lankan clients and their carers.

100



carers and **foster and kinship carers** were supported to have their rights as carers recognised and to learn self-advocacy skills in the process.

124



Young Carers were supported to balance school, home and caring duties through our **Carer Gateway** services.

172



Young Carers were provided **Covid-19 support packages** specifically tailored to help them cope with the impact of the pandemic.

84



carers were supported to apply for ACT Government **Respite Effect and Recovery grants**.

26



adults living with disability attended our **Hub program** which enabled them to maintain social connection and develop essential life skills.

Our services were impacted by COVID-19 with many of our group activities moving to online delivery. Other services, such as Cottage Respite, temporarily ceased service provision and then returned to operating on reduced numbers.

Carer Satisfaction

Results from the monthly Carers ACT Carers Satisfaction Surveys from July 2020-June 2021 show:

91%



of carers felt **heard, supported, and respected** by Carers ACT.

86%



of carers reported that the support Carers ACT provided **helped them to manage their role as a carer.**

85%



of carers felt **satisfied with the services** they had received from Carers ACT.

80%



of carers felt **able to deal with issues** that they sought help for from Carers ACT.

“I felt valued and heard. I know I can reach out and have someone to talk to without feeling like I need to fill someone else's bucket. It has been a while since someone understood how hard it can be. Having someone to talk to gave me a boost and left me feeling I was doing a good job as a carer.”

“The support and advice I've received has been very helpful, but more than that I have made friends who have helped me smile through difficult times.”

“When I required emotional support, Carers Act provided me with the assistance I needed to continue to look after my husband and have done so for the last 20 years. I am eternally grateful for the support and care they provide to me to help me continue in my role as my husband's carer.”

“The services that I received from Carers ACT have made a huge difference to my life. Counselling, support group, information courses and the yoga group have improved my mental health and physical ability to cope with my situation.”

“A very useful, helpful and much needed service for carers. It gives us an outlet to recharge and be appreciated for doing a job that is often overwhelming, under-appreciated and misunderstood.”

Carer Journeys

These Carer Journeys show how we support our clients through various stages of their caring experience. We recognise that every carer's experience is unique and constantly endeavour to respond to the individual needs of our clients and support them through various stages of their caring journey.

Follow Anna's journey



Anna is a 16-year-old carer who joined the Young Carer Group at school after becoming a young carer for her father with a mental health condition.

Anna was supported by a Young Carer worker to develop a care plan to ensure that she received the supports needed to look after her dad, succeed at school and spend time with her friends. As part of the care plan Anna accessed cooking lessons with a friend so she could learn to prepare nutritious meals while sharing memories with her friend.

Care Planning

Our care planners meet with each client to assess their individual needs and identify which supports and services they need to enable them to manage their caring role, achieve a balance and maintain their wellbeing. Care plans are tailor-fit to each client's unique situation and evolves as the client goes through various stages of their caring journey.



Anna was connected to the Young Carer Bursary Program to apply for a scholarship of \$3000 which she used to buy a new computer and pay for tutoring, both of which helped her to graduate Year 10 and move forward with her education.

Young Carer Bursary Program

The Young Carer Bursary Program is delivered in partnership with Carers Australia. The program supports young carers to continue with their education and offers 1000 bursaries of \$3000 each year to young carers up to the aged 12-25.

[Young Carer Bursary](#) | [Young Carers Network](#)



Balancing life as a young carer proved to be stressful at times. To help Anna manage her emotions, she was connected with a Carer Gateway Counsellor to build her understanding and skills, but mostly so she had someone to talk to who understood what she was going through.

Counselling

Caring for a loved one is important work, but it can also be stressful at times. The Carer Gateway Counselling Service can help by providing confidential counselling at a time to suit you. Professional counsellors are available to talk through the concerns you have and how you feel about your carer role.

[CarerGateway Counselling](#)



Anna had the opportunity to build friendships and skills through participating in the Young Carers programs and workshops, which were funded through our sponsorship with Shaw Building Group and their supporters. They provided Anna with a chance to have fun and to feel less isolated by meeting other young carers in our support groups.

Shaw

Through the generous support of Shaw Building Group, we are able to provide much-needed respite services, retreats, tuition assistance, scholarships, and essential equipment to carers and the people they care for.

[Community Engagement](#) | [Shaw Building Group](#)

Follow Xi's journey



Xi is a 40-year-old father of a daughter with a cognitive disability. Xi heard about the supports offered through Carers ACT Carer Gateway through his doctor and reached out to find out more about how the services could help him as he started in his role as a carer.

Carer Gateway Services

Carers ACT is the local service delivery partner of the Carer Gateway in the ACT. Carer Gateway provides a range of services and supports for carers including counselling, respite care, coaching, peer support and skills courses. These services are delivered both in person and online.

[Home](#) | [Carer Gateway](#)



Xi was connected to our NDIS support coordinator who help him, and his daughter identify his goals and obtain the supports and services needed to achieve these.

Support Coordination

Support Coordination is an NDIS funded support that is designed to help participants make the most of their NDIS funds. Participants work with our Support Coordinators to determine how their funds will be spent, choosing the best options for services and connecting with service providers. Our Support Coordinators will work alongside you to support and empower you to make your NDIS plan active and help you to manage your plan.

[NDIS Support Coordination - Carers ACT](#)



Xi's daughter elected to attend the Hub program and participate in various day time activities. This also enabled his daughter to build life skills and make new friends.

The Hub Program

Our Hub Day Program provides people with disabilities the opportunity to build social connections, access community activities and facilities, build skills towards independence and have an engaging environment where they feel respected.

[The Hub: Day Program - Cognitive Disability - Carers ACT](#)



Xi joined the Burger & Beers Men's Peer Support Group where he connected with other carers and built a support network that understood the journey he was on. This group helped Xi feel connected with other members and learned some tips on how to manage his role as a carer.

Peer Support Groups

Carer support groups allow carers to meet on a regular basis to discuss their caring role, socialise, share information, and offer each other support. Our peer support groups help enable you to connect with other carers who have similar experiences. Many of our participants have made life-long friends through our peer support programs.

[Support Groups - Carers ACT](#)



Through conversations with his care planner Xi developed a wellbeing plan that enables him to manage the stress of balancing all the roles he has in his life. The plan helps Xi to focus his limited time in the areas of his life that will build his wellbeing. Following the plan helps Xi to feel in control and enables him to take some time out to focus on him.

5 Ways to Wellbeing

Carers ACT works in collaboration with the Royal Melbourne Hospital's to promote the "5 Ways to Wellbeing" initiative. This program outlines five simple and effective ways to improve your psychological and emotional health that are based on extensive international research. This program has helped many carers maintain a positive wellbeing and balance in their caring role.

[Carer's Wellbeing - The 5 Ways to Wellbeing - Carers ACT](#)



Xi set a goal to attend "return-to-employment" workshops to improve his chances of securing employment. Through his engagement with the Flexible families Program, Carers ACT provided replacement care so Xi could attend without added stress and anxiety.

Flexible Family Support Program

Carers ACT in partnership with the ACT Government delivers the Flexible Family Support Program which offers grants to families with a member who has a disability. These grants enable families to improve the quality of their lives, maintain their family relationships, build capacity and contribute to the wider community.



With Xi's daughter attending the Hub Day Program and his newfound confidence in applying for jobs, Xi has now secured employment and is managing to juggle all of his roles with renewed hope for the future.

Follow Amara's journey



Amara is a 75-year-old carer of her spouse who has Dementia. Amara was referred to Carers ACT following her spouse having been admitted to hospital.

Amara's husband was assessed as requiring additional support to remain at home. Amara found it more difficult to leave her husband whilst she went to the shops or to the hairdressers. Amara had given up completely on having her hair done as this meant she was away from the house for too long. Through our flexible respite program we provided a support worker to stay at home with her husband so Amara could have her hair cut and colored.

Flexible Respite

Carers ACT is an approved provider to deliver Flexible Respite service to carers of people aged 65 years or older (or 50 years or older if Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander). Flexible Respite involves a paid support worker coming to your home to provide help with domestic tasks, personal care or medical appointments, which allow the carer, to have a short break.

[In-Home Services - Carers ACT](#)



As Amara became increasingly concerned about her husband wandering away or falling over and getting hurt when she wasn't watching, we purchased a dementia watch that would help Amara locate her husband and raise an alarm if he was hurt.

Equipment Provision

Carers ACT is a registered service provider under the [My Aged Care](#) Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP). We provide subsidised support to obtain goods & equipment, for eligible people who are 65 years or older (50 years or older if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) who are still living at home and in need assistance to continue living independently.

[Equipment provision - Carers ACT](#)



When Amara needed a rest and some time to focus on her health and wellbeing, we supported her by providing her husband with a week's respite in our cottage program. During the week her husband was looked after and enjoyed gardening, cooking and chasing the chooks. Amara benefited from the break so much that her husband now has a week's respite every 3 months.

Short-Stay Cottage Program

Deakin Cottage and Naragana-Wali Cottage are a "home away from home" that provide personal and professional care for people who are ageing and/or living with dementia. Our services include interactive day programs, overnight stays, and short-term respite stays, which enable family and friend carers to have a short break from caring.

[Ageing & Dementia Short-Stay Cottages - Carers ACT](#)



As her husband's care needs increased, he was provided with a Home Care Package to purchase the supports he needs. Carers ACT worked with Amara and her husband to develop a care plan to meet their needs and through the Home Care Package administration program has purchased the supports to enable Amara to continue to care for her husband in their home.

Home Care Package Coordination

Carers ACT operates a coordination service which helps older individuals with complex care needs to manage their Home Care Package and continue to live independently in their homes. We book our services with external providers and allow you the flexibility to choose and change your service providers based on your personal preference.

[Home Care Package Coordination - Carers ACT](#)

ACT Carers Strategy Progress Report 2018-2028

Carers ACT continues to work in partnership with the ACT Government, carers, and the community sector to develop the ACT Carers Strategy 2018-2028 - a framework to support and recognise the work of carers and make Canberra more carer-friendly.

A **Three-Year Action Plan** was launched in October 2018, which outlined 25 actions that will deliver on the vision, outcomes and priorities established in the Strategy. These actions fall broadly under five themes: services and supports for carers; recognition and awareness; inclusion; support for young carers; and workforce and skills recognition.

Year 2020-21 saw the completion of the third year of the first action plan.

Building on the work we have already undertaken and the services and programs we provide, we proudly share the ways in which Carers ACT has continued to contribute to the implementation of several actions in the ACT Carers Strategy:

Action 2

Deliver programs and activities to help carers, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) carers, navigate available services and supports, such as mentoring for new carers.

Carers ACT developed the following programs to enable caring communities to navigate and access services and supports to maintain their health and

wellbeing in accessible and culturally safe environments:

- Carers ACT received funding through the Commonwealth Home Support Program to develop and deliver CALD-specific social support groups for people who are frail aged and their carers. Groups have been established for people from Sri Lankan and Indian backgrounds, with more 30 people attending weekly.
- Carers ACT runs both the Ngullaway Art Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers and a retreat for Mental Health Carers, which provide respite and assist carers to access and navigate services.

Action 3

Define respite care and promote access to suitable respite care.

- Carers ACT established a partnership with Palliative Care ACT to implement a respite care cottage for people receiving palliative care. This new facility can support people requiring overnight care, enabling carers to have a break from their caring role.
- Carers ACT secured a second facility to provide cottage respite care for people who are frail aged. The second of its kind in Canberra, the cottage can support 4 people who are frail aged for overnight respite per night and can provide day respite for up to 12 people. This provides carers with a short break and opportunities to engage in other activities. These facilities allow carers to access suitable respite carer, helping them maintain and prioritise their health and wellbeing.
- Carers ACT promoted access to

respite care during the COVID-19 health emergency, by sponsoring the Winter Wonderland Community Activity Packs. This initiative provided respite to carers during a challenging period and encouraged engagement with fun activities to support mental wellbeing. They included activities and resources for children, Know Your Neighbour cards, a Carers ACT Information Sheet, and telehealth resources. The Winter Wonderland packs were distributed in several neighbourhoods and were available at local shopping centres, ACT libraries and community organisations.

- Carers ACT contributed to the co-design process established by ACT Health Directorate for the implementation of two Safe Haven Cafes for people with mental health conditions. These will provide a safe space for mental health consumers, providing carers with reassurance so they can take small breaks from their caring role.

Action 4

Support carers to advocate for themselves and the people they care for.

- Carers ACT supported carers to advocate for themselves through

staff training to build carers' capacity and capability to self-advocate; education programs to inform and empower carers; and online training and tools.

- Carers ACT has developed the Carer Navigator, a website for mental health carers. This will assist carers to navigate their way in the mental health system, better understand the service system, be aware of their rights, and access tips to support advocacy.

Action 7

Promote carers in the ACT during National Carers Week.

Carers ACT coordinated Carers Week activities to increase awareness and recognition of carers, support carers to advocate for themselves and celebrate the contribution they make to our community. These activities raised the ACT community's awareness of carers, and recognise carers in a formal, intentional, and consistent way.

Activities included:

- Carers Week flags on Commonwealth and Kings Ave bridges
- Radio interviews with Carers ACT, carers, and the people they care for
- Carers attending the Carers Australia

Afternoon Tea with the Governor General

- Annual cocktail party

Action 8

Deliver an annual event to celebrate the role and contribution of carers.

Carers ACT organised a cocktail party in February 2021 with 100 carers, to recognise and celebrate the contribution carers make to the community.

Action 12

Collaborate to link existing programs to provide tailored support to meet the education and training needs of young carers.

- Carers ACT, through a donation from Shaw Building Group, provided young carers with scholarships to support their engagement in education and training.
- Carers ACT continued to resource young carer support groups in 5 secondary schools in the ACT and provided support and information to teachers and pastoral care staff. This financial assistance supports the operation of young carer support groups, ensuring an ongoing connection to community.

Action 13

Advocate for the provision of mental health and wellbeing support to young carers.

- Carers ACT, in collaboration with CYCLOPS, advocated for and provided mental health and wellbeing supports to young carers by developing and delivering a new young carer support group (carers aged 15-18 years) that focuses on wellbeing through a fun and social space. The support group creates a space for 15 young carers to connect and have a break from their caring responsibilities by engaging socially with others.
- Carers ACT, in collaboration with CYCLOPS, conducted a young carers camp during Youth Week 2020, with 12 young carers participating in the activity.

Action 14

Employ engagement approaches that enable participation by carers, including in policy development.

- Carers ACT is represented on the Oversight Group: COVID-19 Plans for People with Disability (the Oversight Group) and attends monthly meetings to contribute to the ACT Government's pandemic response

and works closely with CSD's Office for Disability. Carers ACT also participates in relevant out-of-session meetings related to the Oversight Group, such as a recent discussion about ACT Health website information related to carers and the issue of quarantine.

- Mental Health Carers Voice, through Carers ACT, continues to employ a range of engagement activities to ensure that the voices of people with lived experience as a mental health carer are included in policy and service development.
- Carers ACT supports carers to sit on a range of committees and forums to ensure the voice of carers is included in policy development. Carers ACT supplements this with staff participating in committees to represent the interests of carers.
- Carers ACT conducted a range of consultations, surveys, focus groups and forums to engage carers in a range of policy development discussions across government.



“When you are caring for someone, the focus is constantly on them, not you. Caring is a tough gig, it is great attending activities at Carers ACT, as the focus is on you and you feel that you matter too. The Carers ACT staff are always friendly and supportive.”

Our Staff

Results from the Carers ACT Employee Satisfaction & Engagement Survey Report, conducted by Your Say on Nov 2020, show:

90%



of staff say Carers ACT has a good culture and provides an encouraging and inclusive workplace

88%



of staff say they are treated fairly and with respect, and feel supported by management

89%



of staff feel they have a good balance between their work and personal lives

85%



of staff say they derive personal satisfaction from their work

80%



of staff feel their work is valued and recognised

93%



of staff say they were well supported while working through COVID-19

Our Partners & Supporters

Shaw Building Group

Carers ACT would like to thank Shaw Building Group for its continued support for the past 16 years. Through their annual Bowls Day, Shaw Building Group raised almost \$124,000 for carers, the highest amount of donations throughout the history of our partnership. This generous support enabled us to provide respite services, retreats, tuition assistance, scholarships, and essential equipment to those who need it most. We greatly value our longstanding relationship with Shaw Building Group and thank them for their ongoing support.

Community support

Carers ACT would like to express our gratitude for the financial and volunteer support from numerous individuals and companies throughout the year, whose generosity has made a huge impact in the daily lives of carers and the individuals that they care for. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the carers who gave their time to share their stories and promote carers' needs in the media, government, forums, and committees which have helped shape policy and bring awareness to the valuable contribution that carers make to our community.

Funding support

Carers ACT would like to acknowledge and thank the following organisations for their continued support and funding:

- Australian Government Department of Social Services
- Australian Government Department of Health
- ACT Government Health Directorate
- ACT Government Community Services Directorate

Financial Report

For the year ended 30 June 2021

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