



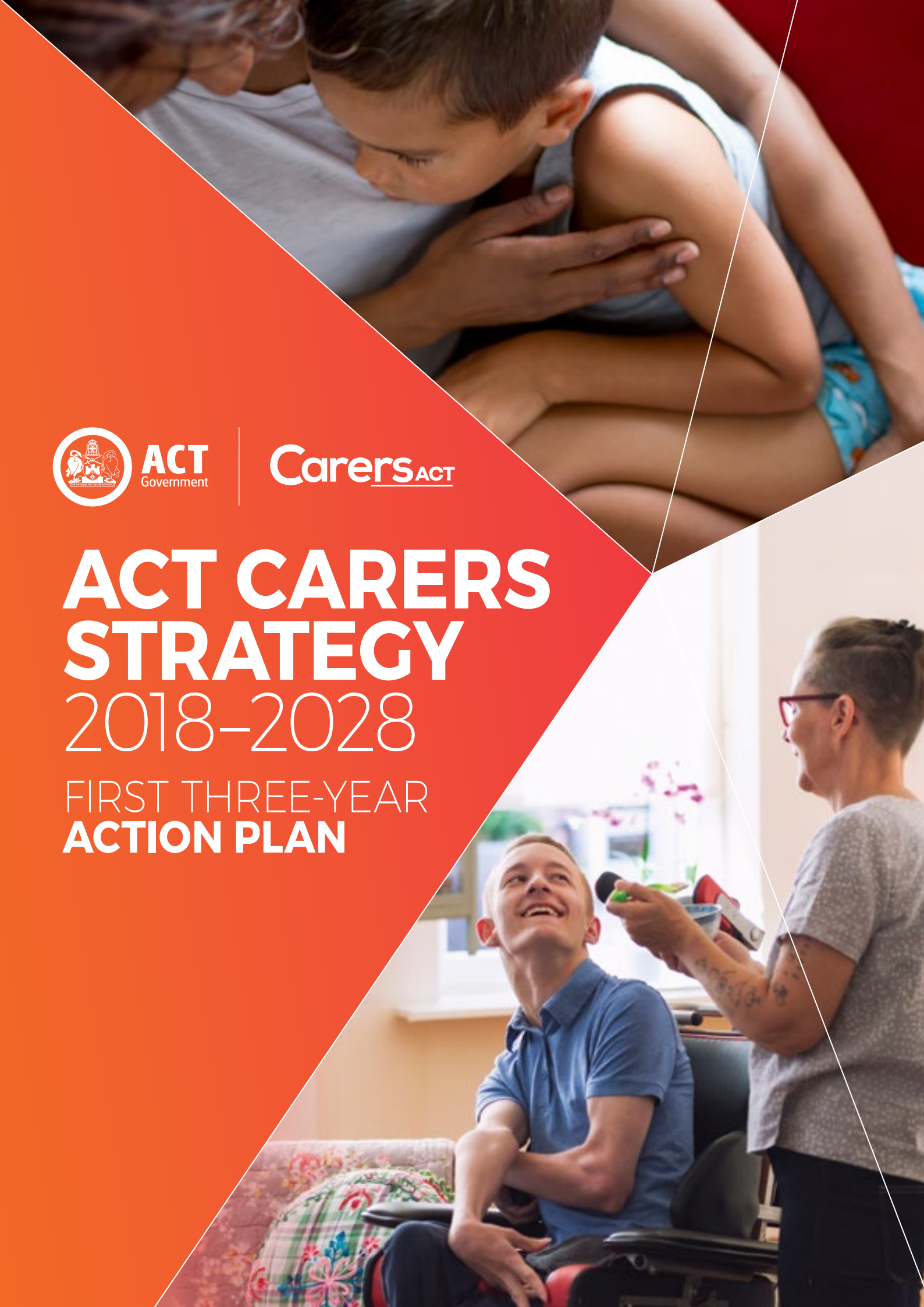
ACT
Government

CarersACT

ACT CARERS STRATEGY

2018–2028

FIRST THREE-YEAR
ACTION PLAN



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Australian Capital Territory is Ngunnawal Country. The ACT Government acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of the Canberra region. The region was also an important meeting place and significant to other Aboriginal groups. The ACT Government acknowledges the historical dispossession and its continuing legacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and also acknowledges their vital ongoing contribution to the ACT community.



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GLOSSARY

ACRONYM	FULL TITLE
ACTCOSS	ACT Council of Social Service Inc.
ADACAS	ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CIT	Canberra Institute of Technology
CMTEDD	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
CSD	Community Services Directorate
CYCLOPS ACT	Anglicare ACT Young Carers Program (Connecting Young Carers to Life Opportunities and Personalised Support)
EPSDD	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
HCCA	Health Care Consumers Association
MHCC ACT	Mental Health Community Coalition ACT
SHOUT	Self-Help Organisations United Together
TCCS	Transport Canberra and City Services





Mr Chris Steel MLA

Minister for Community Services
and Facilities

MINISTER'S FOREWORD

Carers are an essential part of our community, providing unpaid care for family, friends and neighbours, or for children who are unable to live with their families. Sometimes their caring role may affect carers' own wellbeing and capacity to live a full and rewarding life. It is important that the valuable contribution of carers is recognised by the wider community.

The ACT Government has partnered with Carers ACT to develop the *ACT Carers Strategy 2018–2028*. The Strategy provides a framework to support and recognise the work of carers, acknowledging the difference they make in our community and responding to key challenges faced by carers.

This first three-year Action Plan under the Strategy was developed by the Carers Strategy Taskforce, a collaboration between representatives from government, the community sector and the carer community. The Taskforce used a deliberative approach that ensured diverse voices were heard and encouraged robust and informed discussion of actions to best support carers.

I am proud of the way government, the community sector and carers have come together at every stage of the development of the Strategy, ensuring a strong carer voice guides the direction of the Strategy. In particular, I am grateful for the contribution of carers at each stage of the process to develop the Strategy. Their passion and dedication are evident in this work, providing an authentic voice to guide actions that will better support the wellbeing of carers in our community.

The Action Plan identifies actions and initiatives that will deliver on the vision, outcomes and priorities established for carers by the Strategy.

Implementing the Strategy will help us realise the vision of a community that cares for carers. I look forward to seeing carers supported and acknowledged in their vital role.

CARERS IN THE ACT

Carers make a vital contribution to the fabric of our Canberra community. In the ACT, approximately 48,000 carers provide unpaid care to family members, friends or neighbours who are living with disability, a physical or mental health condition, or are frail aged. Some provide care to children and young people who are unable to live with their families.

Carers assist the people they care for with daily living tasks and support them to more fully participate in society. This contribution is often unrecognised by the wider community and may affect carers' own wellbeing and capacity to live a full and rewarding life.

THE ACT CARERS STRATEGY 2018–2028

The ACT Government is committed to recognising and supporting carers, and responding to the needs of carers, their rights, choices and opportunities to participate fully in all areas of life.

In 2017, the ACT Government partnered with Carers ACT to develop the *ACT Carers Strategy 2018–2028* (the Strategy). The Strategy will serve as a framework to support and recognise the work of carers, acknowledging the difference they make in our community. The Strategy seeks to improve the visibility of carers in the community and broaden community appreciation of the essential contribution carers make through their caring role.

In 2017, the Carers Voice Deliberative Panel engaged 49 carers and other community members to establish a vision for a carer-friendly city, the outcomes we want to see for carers and our shared priorities. The deliberative democracy process enabled authentic collaboration between government and the carer community in the development of the Strategy, and ensured those in the community with lived experience shaped the focus of the Strategy.

The *Vision, Outcomes and Priorities Statement* and the *Carers Voice Panel Report* were launched by the Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion in December 2017.

FEEDBACK FROM THE 2017 CARERS VOICE PANEL

I am so overwhelmed by the knowledge and compassion of people in the room.

I love the process. I think it's extremely valuable. Not just a ticking of the box, it is real consultation.

The deliberative democracy process is extremely encouraging, it does show a commitment from the ACT Government to take on these issues.

There is a bit of hope that this time the Government will say what they mean and mean what they say.

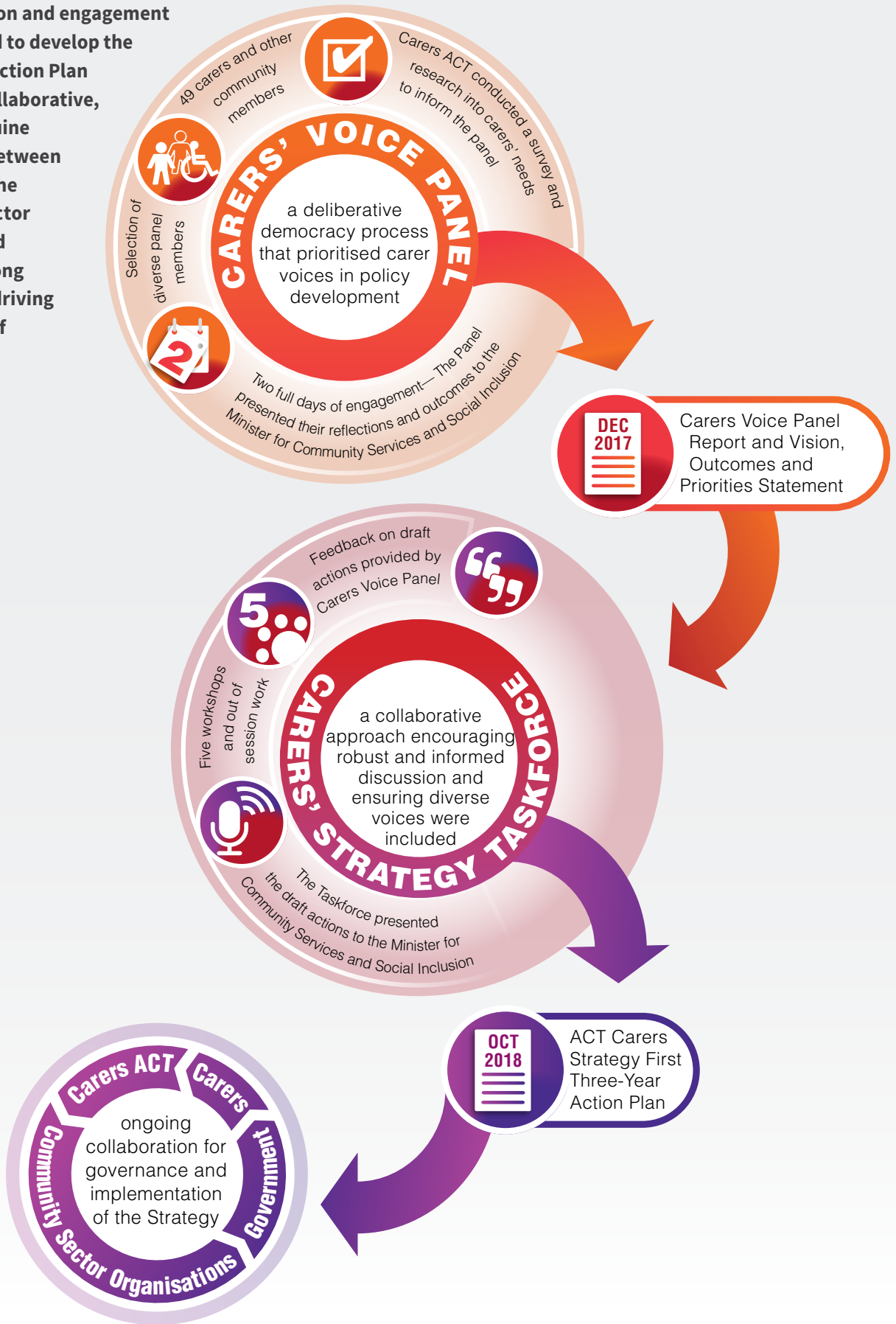
This process has been an amazing and uplifting experience, especially meeting people and finding links that bring us together.

My experience of deliberative democracy confirmed that we have a wonderful community with the ability to handle anything.



CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The consultation and engagement processes used to develop the Strategy and Action Plan were highly collaborative, providing genuine engagement between government, the community sector and carers, and ensuring a strong carer voice in driving the direction of the Strategy.



VISION, OUTCOMES AND PRIORITIES

Carers make a huge and largely unrecognised contribution to the ACT community and that deserves to be recognised.

A better understanding of the role of carers, through increased community awareness, must lead to more support for carers across the ACT society and thus aid their wellbeing and health.

The Carers Voice Panel, which helped develop this statement, reflected the diversity of Canberra's carers. Carers of all ages, culturally and linguistically diverse carers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers, and carers with disability participated and were heard.

VISION

A community that cares for carers and the people they care for.

Supporting carers is investing in Canberra's future.

OUTCOMES

Improving community awareness of the value and contribution of carers

We need to work to educate, build knowledge and understanding of the role and work of carers in the community.

Carers need to be recognised in their own right as carers and not just as 'a significant other'.

They need to be recognised by the community at large and identified professionals as being an essential part of the care team because of their comprehensive knowledge of the needs of the person they care for. This will involve improving the knowledge and understanding of the community, medical practitioners, allied health professionals, child protection, educators, police and detention officers, and will result in a positive change in mindset.

A community that is proud of its carers, and proud to be a caring community, is able to support carers better. In addition, caring families also need to be recognised as normal families, despite having special needs.

Recognising carers' skills and knowledge

We need to recognise the skills, knowledge and experience carers have, how they translate in practice to individuals in their care and enable these to be recognised in the workforce. These skills, knowledge and experience may be able to be mapped to nationally-accredited courses or recognised as prior learning to facilitate workforce engagement or recognition. In addition, improved supports need to be implemented to ensure young carers are supported to complete their formal education and achieve their aspirations.

Accepting people who are cared for as normal people in the community, regardless of any disability

We must develop strategies to increase community understanding of how to relate to people with disabilities, so that we become a more inclusive society.

Embedding within the ACT community a culture that every ACT citizen has some role as, and an ability, to contribute to caring

In a caring society, everybody should feel they have an ability, or role, to contribute to the care of those in need.



PRIORITIES

Enabling carers to take better care of themselves through the provision of more support services, including physical and mental health

Carers should be proud to identify themselves as a carer, and should have access to support services needed to ensure their own health does not suffer as a result of their caring responsibilities.

Wider supports

Carers must have access to support services as needed to ensure their own health does not deteriorate due to their caring responsibilities. These supports need to be tailored for each carer and adaptable as a caring role changes.

Increased awareness and skills within government agencies

We must increase the skills within ACT Government agencies, at organisational and individual levels, to work with and respect the needs of carers.

Recognition means respect for the skills, knowledge and contribution of carers throughout the community, government, service providers and workplaces.

This also means recognition within the legal system and by medical and other professionals, so carers are respected for their knowledge and expertise and are recognised as having valid knowledge about the people they care for. Working side-by-side with the medical and other professionals is what carers want.

Education means both increasing opportunities and support for young carers to complete their formal education and achieve their aspirations. It also means recognising the valuable skills, knowledge and experience that people gain by being carers through a form of accreditation and formal recognition.

The skills, knowledge and experience of carers should also be validated in the workplace.

Information access

Improved access to relevant and current information means better access to information that meets the needs of carers.

Ongoing carer engagement

Carers need to be involved in determining their own journey. Carers know the services they need to best support them in their caring role and these do not always align with what is perceived or offered as support. Carers need to be involved in policy formulation and review by government and NGOs, to ensure that services continue to align with their needs.

Enhanced support services

There are a range of support services that are needed or need to be enhanced, reviewed or improved to support carers. Improving support for carers is a responsibility of all levels of government and the broader community, and must take account of the diversity of carers and caring roles.

All carers' needs are treated equitably

Different types of carers have different needs but all of these needs must be acknowledged. Carers must be treated equitably.

THE FIRST THREE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

The first three-year Action Plan establishes actions that will deliver on the vision, outcomes and priorities established in the Strategy.

These actions were developed in 2018 by the Carers Strategy Taskforce using a co-design approach. The Taskforce included representatives from ACT Government directorates and community sector organisations, as well as members of the carer community.

The actions in this plan fall broadly under five themes: services and supports for carers; recognition and awareness; inclusion; support for young carers; and workforce and skills recognition. The actions under these themes support and deliver on the outcomes and priorities of the Strategy.

Several cross-cutting issues should be taken into consideration in the implementation of all actions in the Action Plan:

- 1** Ensure services and supports are accessible for carers, including those with disability or health issues of their own.
- 2** Ensure services and supports are culturally appropriate to meet the needs of carers from our diverse community, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers, carers from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and LGBTIQ carers.
- 3** While support for young carers is a theme of the Action Plan, the impact on young carers should be a consideration in the implementation of all actions.

Implementation of the actions under the Action Plan will be the shared responsibility of ACT Government directorates and community sector organisations. Collaboration between government and the community sector will be critical in implementing these actions to make a real difference for carers.

GOVERNANCE

Governance of the Strategy will be conducted through a deliberative and collaborative approach that involves government, the community sector, including Carers ACT, and members of the carer community. This approach will build upon the key involvement and strong voice of carers that was present in all aspects of the Strategy's development, ensuring their continued participation in oversight of the Strategy's implementation.

REPORTING AND EVALUATION

Lead agencies will contribute to an annual Ministerial Statement or update that will be tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Community Services and Facilities. The Statement will detail activities and efforts undertaken on actions and outcomes under the Action Plan.

The governance group will monitor the implementation of actions under the plan and the completion of actions over the three-year life of the plan.



FEEDBACK FROM THE 2018 CARERS STRATEGY TASKFORCE

It's strong – a new way forward for participants in the processes of government.

It was really tense at the start and I felt we had a heavy load.

Lots of different knowledge, we've come a long way, covered lots of ground in a positive and supportive way.

This was the first time end-users of a strategy have led the process and the product.

We've committed to actions together.

It has been genuine, real and great to have all the lived experience informing our work along the way.

OVERVIEW

Government, the community sector and carers worked together to develop the three-year Action Plan.

Five themes support the plan:

THEME	DESCRIPTION
Services and supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We support carers to find and use services to care for their health and wellbeing.
Recognition and awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We recognise the important contribution carers make to the community.
Young carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We support young carers to finish school and achieve their goals. • Young carers are resilient and connected to their community.
Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We include carers in decisions that impact them. • We recognise carers' expertise about the people they care for.
Workforce and skills recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We recognise carers' knowledge and skills in workplaces. • We support carers to balance work with their caring role.

ACTION PLAN



SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

OUTCOMES

- Carers are supported to navigate and access services and supports to maintain their health and wellbeing as they undertake their caring role.

PRIORITIES

- Information access
- Enhanced support services

ACTION	LEAD AGENCIES	SUPPORT AGENCIES
1 Develop and deliver a handbook to support improved understanding of the role of kinship and foster carers in the child protection and out of home care systems, including carer participation and engagement in care planning.	Community Services Directorate (CSD) and ACT Together	Uniting and Carers ACT
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	CSD, ACT Health, Education Directorate, carer support and CALD organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander managed services
3 Define respite care and promote access to suitable respite care.	Carers ACT	ACT Health, CSD and carer support organisations
4 Support carers to advocate for themselves and the people they care for.	Carers ACT and ADACAS	CSD and Advocacy for Inclusion
5 Support carers of people with disability to access information and services that assist them in their caring role.	CSD	Carers ACT
6 Promote digital services that carers can access, including access to government web platforms.	Transport Canberra and City Services (Libraries ACT)	SHOUT and Access Canberra

RECOGNITION AND AWARENESS

OUTCOMES

- Carers feel their role is recognised by the community.
- The ACT community has a greater awareness of carers and their valuable contribution to our community.

PRIORITIES

- Recognition
- All carers' needs are treated equitably

ACTION	LEAD AGENCIES	SUPPORT AGENCIES
7 Promote carers in the ACT during National Carers Week.	Carers ACT	CSD, Chief Minister Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) and Carers Strategy Taskforce
8 Deliver an annual event to celebrate the role and contribution of carers.	Carers ACT	CSD and CMTEDD
9 Develop and implement a communications strategy to promote awareness of carers in the community.	CSD	CMTEDD, Carers ACT and ACT Together

YOUNG CARERS

OUTCOMES

- Young carers (up to 25 years) are supported to complete their education and achieve their aspirations.
- Young carers are resilient and connected to their community.

PRIORITIES

- Education
- Enhanced support services

ACTION	LEAD AGENCIES	SUPPORT AGENCIES
10 Identify and respond to young carers who require additional support in order to remain engaged in education or training.	Education Directorate	Carers ACT, CYCLOPS ACT, CMTEDD (Skills Canberra) and Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT)
11 Flexibly support young carers by collaboratively designing individualised learning pathways.	Education Directorate	CSD, ACT Health and CIT
12 Collaborate to link existing programs in order to provide tailored support to meet the education and training needs of young carers.	Carers ACT, CYCLOPS ACT and Education Directorate	CMTEDD (Skills Canberra) and local tertiary educational institutions
13 Advocate for the provision of mental health and wellbeing support to young carers.	CYCLOPS ACT, Carers ACT and ACT Health	headspace Canberra, Capital Health Network, Mental Health Community Coalition (MHCC) ACT and Education Directorate

ACTION PLAN CONTINUED

INCLUSION

OUTCOMES

- Carers are engaged in government processes in areas that impact them.
- Carers' expertise is recognised in decision-making around the people they care for.

PRIORITIES

- Recognition
- Ongoing carer engagement
- Enhanced support services

ACTION	LEAD AGENCIES	SUPPORT AGENCIES
14 Employ engagement approaches that enable participation by carers, including in policy development.	All directorates	ACTCOSS, Youth Coalition and Families ACT
15 Seek input from carers on initiatives that promote the rights and inclusion of people with disability.	CSD	
16 Include carers in consultation and planning for Better Suburbs.	Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS)	
17 Consider carer needs and engage carers in consultations for planning initiatives.	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD)	Carers ACT
18 Identify barriers and explore options to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge carers on health plans, including their role and support needs. • Consider carers' needs during hospital discharge processes. 	ACT Health	Capital Health Network, Health Care Consumers Association (HCCA), Carers ACT and MHCC ACT
19 Conduct a carer impact assessment for the 'Hospital in the Home' initiative, to consider carers' needs and their role as part of the care team.	ACT Health	Carers ACT, Capital Health Network and HCCA



WORKFORCE AND SKILLS RECOGNITION

OUTCOMES

- Carers' knowledge and skills are recognised in the workforce.
- Carers can balance workforce participation with their caring role.

PRIORITIES

- Recognition
- Education

ACTION	LEAD AGENCIES	SUPPORT AGENCIES
20 Assist carers to navigate the range of relevant, subsidised training opportunities and learning supports available in the ACT.	CMTEDD (Skills Canberra) and CIT	Carers ACT
21 Ensure the views and training needs of carers in the Canberra community are represented during annual consultation on the ACT Skills Needs List.	CMTEDD (Skills Canberra)	Carers ACT and carer support organisations
22 Promote innovative adult community education projects designed to address barriers to carers' participation in vocational education and training (VET) and employment.	CMTEDD (Skills Canberra)	Carers ACT, CIT and carer support organisations
23 Promote carer access to services for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), migrant and refugee communities that build skills relevant to workforce participation.	CSD	CALD organisations and CMTEDD (Skills Canberra)
24 Engage the Canberra Business Chamber and private sector to promote employment of carers and support for carer employees.	Carers ACT	CMTEDD (Skills Canberra) and Canberra Business Chamber
25 Develop standard wording around recognition and support of carers in the workplace to support advocacy work.	Carers ACT	Unions ACT and Fair Work Australia



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For more information about the *ACT Carers Strategy 2018-2028*, visit:
www.communityservices.act.gov.au