

# *Queensland Government Carer Recognition Policy*

February 2007



## Message from the Premier and Minister

The Queensland Government Carer Recognition Policy was first released in 2003 as an initial step toward recognising the significant contribution carers make to our Queensland community.

The Queensland Government remains committed to recognising carers and their role in helping the people they care for. In demonstration of this commitment we have prepared a Queensland Government Carer Action Plan 2006–10 that sets out concrete actions which will support carers in their daily role.

To coincide with the launch of the action plan, the Carer Recognition Policy has been updated to reflect the current picture of caring in our community.

This updated policy document includes information about carers in Queensland, existing initiatives, standards and legislation, and useful contacts. However, the policy itself, and the Queensland Government's commitment to recognising and supporting carers, has not changed. The Carer Recognition Policy will continue the commitment of the government to fostering understanding within the community of the issues and challenges facing carers in Queensland.

Helping carers is one of the best ways to also help the people they care for and the Queensland Government is proud to continue to act on the Carer Recognition Policy through the introduction of the Carer Action Plan 2006–10.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P Beattie".

Peter Beattie MP  
Premier of Queensland  
and Minister for Trade

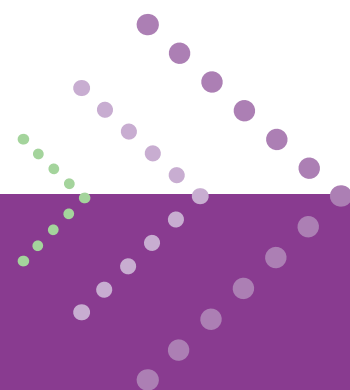


A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W Pitt".

Warren Pitt MP  
Minister for Communities  
Minister for Disability Services  
Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander Partnerships  
Minister for Seniors and Youth

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### Policy statement

In developing and delivering State Government policies and services, the Queensland Government will acknowledge carers and recognise and respect them as individuals and partners in care with the person they care for.

### Scope and purpose

The Carer Recognition Policy illustrates to the community and to all tiers of government how the needs of carers can be recognised, respected and better accommodated. These needs include a range of issues from the delivery of care to the impact caring may have on carers' employment, their family life and general well-being. Raising the status and profile of those who give care in the Queensland community will enrich the quality of life not only of carers but also of those being cared for.

The Carer Recognition Policy provides Queensland Government departments and agencies with a framework to identify and recognise the important role of carers. It provides a clear set of principles and guidelines for Queensland Government agencies to adopt in recognising the role of carers in the design and delivery of relevant policies, programs and services, now and in the future.

### Definition of carer

For the purpose of this policy the term 'carer' is defined as:

*A person of any age who, without being paid, cares for another person who needs ongoing support because of a long-term medical condition, a mental illness, a disability, frailty or the need for palliative care. A carer may or may not be a family member and may or may not live with the person. Volunteers under the auspices of a voluntary organisation are not included.*

### Nature of commitment

The contribution carers make towards the well-being of the people they care for and the community is immense and not always acknowledged. Carers deserve support, respect and recognition for what they do. The Queensland Government Carer Recognition Policy is a crucial first step aimed at achieving this goal.

The purpose of the Carer Recognition Policy is to raise awareness of the role carers play in our community and to provide a basis for the government to work with them and their representatives to develop practical action for now and in the future. Anticipated changes in the population during the next decade will see the role of carers becoming increasingly important.

Recognising and supporting carers cannot be done in isolation from assisting the person for whom they are caring. There is a need to strike a balance between the needs of the carer and the person being cared for. Helping carers is one of the best ways of helping someone they are caring for.



# Carer Recognition Policy

Carer issues span a range of areas such as social policy, health, education, employment and training, and industrial relations. A number of Queensland Government departments and agencies are involved in policy development and service provision for a wide range of people and their carers. The Queensland Government Carer Recognition Policy will help guide future action.

Queensland Government departments are required to work together to deliver a whole-of-government action plan. To ensure the policy is helping and assisting carers, the Queensland Government will continue to listen to carers as their issues are taken forward. Carers will be consulted as part of the monitoring, review and evaluation of this policy.

It must be noted that the Commonwealth Government also has many responsibilities in this area, including providing income support through a range of pensions and benefits for carers. The Commonwealth Government also has the primary funding role for carer entitlements.

## Policy in action: key principles and operational guidelines

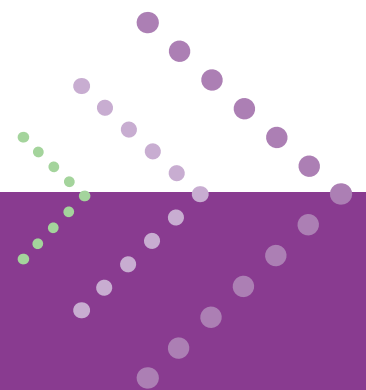
Key principles and operational guidelines underpin the policy and place a responsibility on Queensland Government departments and agencies to action them in a practical way.

The key principles and operational guidelines help turn the policy into action by making programs and services responsive to carers' needs.

### Key principles

The key principles spell out the Queensland Government's philosophy in relation to carers. Accordingly, the Queensland Government will:

- 1) acknowledge, respect and support the valuable contribution made by Queensland carers to those they care for and to the community
- 2) accept the significance of the role of carers, along with those receiving care and with service providers
- 3) ensure information is provided to carers on their rights when dealing with Queensland Government agencies
- 4) acknowledge carers as individuals with their own needs within and beyond the caring situation
- 5) value the expertise and skills of carers in relation to their caring role
- 6) acknowledge and identify the diversity of carers' individual needs, taking into consideration cultural differences, age, disability, religion, socio-economic status, gender identification and where people live in Queensland
- 7) ensure programs and services for carers are responsive, timely, coordinated, innovative, flexible and appropriate
- 8) ensure the appropriate sharing of information and decisions on care with carers in matters that affect them or the care they provide.



### Operational guidelines

The operational guidelines are the Queensland Government's specific commitments in relation to carers. The Queensland Government will:

- 1) establish procedures so care recipients can identify their carer to government agencies when dealing with them
- 2) recognise carers and their range of needs as a specific group, by including them in policy and service delivery planning and development at the individual and system level, where carers' interests are affected
- 3) make appropriate enquiries with the carer if in-home care is necessary to find out the availability of the carer and that they have the information and support required to provide the care
- 4) assist carers to access the specific knowledge, equipment and instructions required to provide in-home care, or alternatively make appropriate referrals to other services
- 5) identify and address the specific needs of families with children and young people who are carers
- 6) address the specific information and support needs of ageing carers and carers in remote and rural regions
- 7) deliver culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers and carers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- 8) enhance policies and programs to enable carers to balance learning, employment and caring responsibilities
- 9) educate and inform government employees to increase responsiveness to the needs of carers
- 10) ensure there are policies and procedures in place for dealing with those occasions where a disagreement arises when a legitimate and necessary role of a carer is disputed.

### Who are carers?

Carers are a diverse group and every caring situation is unique. Carers are people who care for a family member, a friend or another person in need of assistance or support with daily living. They include those caring for the aged, people living with long-term medical conditions, people with a mental illness, people with a disability and people receiving palliative care.

Carers can be adults caring for other adults, parents caring for children who are ill or have a disability, or young carers under 25 years caring for, or involved in the care of, a parent, sibling, relative or friend. The closeness of the caring relationship means care can include emotional support for the person.

# Carer Recognition Policy

Some carers do not call themselves carers but see themselves as wife or husband, mother or father, partner, grandparent, child, friend or neighbour. There can be multiple carers who care as part of a family or community network. At times, because of the nature of the illness, a carer may not be recognised as a carer by the person he or she is providing care to.

The need for care can arise in various ways. It can increase gradually as a result of a progressive medical condition, or growing older and becoming frail. It can also happen suddenly, for instance, as a result of an accident or stroke.

Parent carers are most likely to be caring the longest. The responsibilities may be even greater in the situation of a carer who is a sole parent, has more than one person to care for, or if the carer has a disability or is ageing.

Carers can live in the same house as the person they care for or live close by and visit regularly. Some live a distance away and visit weekly or monthly but nonetheless feel responsibility towards the person they care for. Caring can affect everyone in the family.

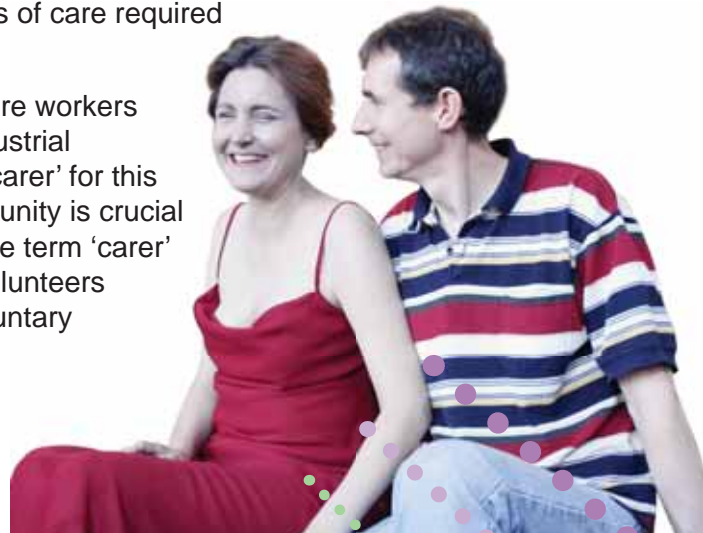
Carers give support with life matters and assist with the health and well-being of the person in their care. This can include tasks of daily living and social, emotional, spiritual and physical support. The individual caring situation can have many complexities and can include managing challenging behaviour.

Carers can be eligible for a Commonwealth Government benefit (either a carer entitlement or a pension) or be in full-time or part-time employment.

Carers give their time to care because of their commitment to and love for the person in need of care. In doing so, their caring role can impact on their own social needs and physical and mental health. Each carer differs in the intensity of their caring role, and this is reflected in the varying stresses, demands and tasks of individual carers' responsibilities. Recognition of and support for the individual needs of carers will improve their health and well-being.

Anyone in our community could at any time be called on to care for someone close to them for either a short or long period of time. It is fundamental to society that we care for family and friends who need help and support. Our community and family life relies on carers and although government has responsibilities in this area, it would not be possible or desirable for government to look after all aspects of care required by people.

While the work done by paid support workers or care workers assists carers in their role, these workers have industrial entitlements and are not included under the term 'carer' for this policy. Similarly, the role of volunteers in our community is crucial to carers and the people they care for. However, the term 'carer' in the context of this document does not include volunteers while they are working under the auspices of a voluntary organisation.

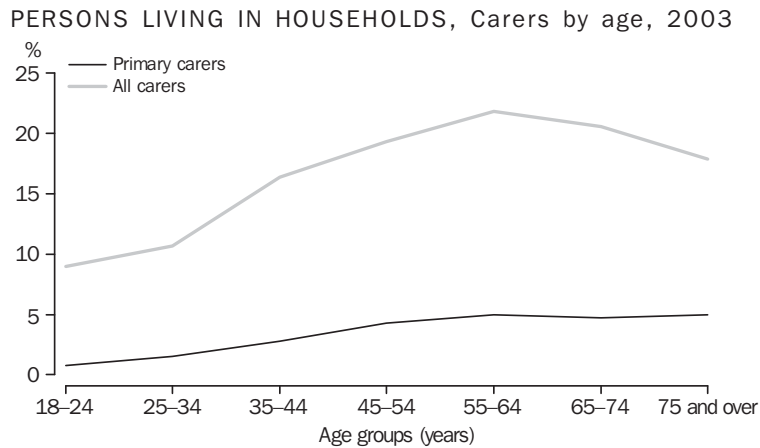


### Key characteristics of Australian carers

The 2003 Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers found that overall in Australia there were 2.6 million carers in Australia who provided assistance to people who required support due to disability or age. Of this total, 19 per cent were primary carers, providing the majority of informal care to a particular individual.

The survey found that 24 per cent of primary carers were aged 65 years or over.

Workforce participation for primary carers (39 per cent) was lower than that of the rest of the surveyed population (68 per cent). A total of 37 per cent of primary carers spent 40 or more hours per week providing care.



Graph - Australian Bureau of Statistics, Survey on Disability, Ageing and Carers, 2004

In 2003 the percentage of people who were carers increased gradually from 9 per cent of the 18–24 year-old age group to 22 per cent of 55–64 year-olds, then declined to 18 per cent of those aged 75 and over. While the proportion of primary carers also increases through the age groups, it does not decline for the group aged 75 and over, and remains steady at 5 per cent.

The 2006 Census included specific questions in relation to the need for care and on carers specifically. It is anticipated that the collection and availability of data on carers will increase in the future to support evidence-based service delivery to carers.



# Carer Recognition Policy

## What is known about carers' needs?

Some of the key issues raised by carers during the government consultations prior to the release of the Carer Recognition Policy in 2003 included the need for:

- public acknowledgment of the role of carers
- recognition of carers' skills and expertise
- involvement of carers in decision making that affects their lives and the lives of those they care for
- employment opportunities
- education and training for the caring role
- access to information
- support and respite services
- consideration of carers as individuals.

## How this policy will improve carers' lives

This policy will improve carers' lives by:

- emphasising the value of the role carers perform and the significant contribution they make to the broader Queensland community
- improving the flexibility and responsiveness of Government systems to support carers to fulfil their role and responsibilities
- providing a broad framework for Queensland Government agencies to review, develop and monitor responses that support carers and enhance their quality of life
- providing a platform on which to base future Queensland Government and community responses to the needs of carers in order to reflect demographic changes in Queensland.

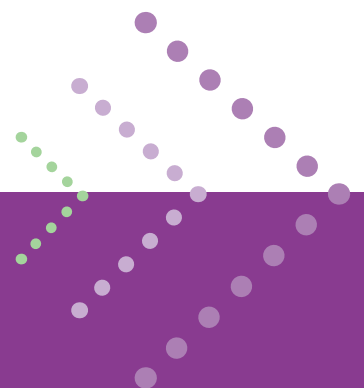
## Putting the policy in context

This policy is to be applied in the context of existing Queensland Government policies and legislation and pertinent Commonwealth legislation, policies and programs.

The following list of initiatives, standards and legislation is not exhaustive.

### Queensland Government initiatives

- Queensland Government Carer Action Plan 2006–10
- Queensland Government Multicultural Policy — *Multicultural Queensland — making a world of difference*
- Queensland Health Action Plan — *building a better health service for Queensland*
- 13HEALTH contact centre initiative
- Carers Matter website
- Queensland Disability Service Standards



## Queensland legislation and policy

- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*
- *Disability Services Act 2006*
- *Electoral Act 1992*
- *Guardianship and Administration Act 2000*
- *Health Services Act 1991*
- *Industrial Relations Act 1999*
- *Mental Health Act 2000*
- *Powers of Attorney Act 1998*
- Queensland Government Information Standard 42: Information Privacy

## National Standards

- National Standards for Mental Health Services
- National Disability Service Standards
- Standards for Palliative Care Provision
- Home and Community Care National Service Standards

## Commonwealth legislation

- *Aged Care Act 1997*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Disability Services Act 1986*
- *Home and Community Care Act 1985*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*
- *Social Security Act 1991*
- *Workplace Relations Act 1996*

## Key contacts for carers

### Carers Queensland

[www.carersqld.asn.au](http://www.carersqld.asn.au)  
1800 242 636

### Commonwealth Carer Resource Centres

[www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)  
1800 242 636

### Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres

[www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)  
1800 059 059

### Commonwealth Carelink Centres

[www.commcarelink.health.gov.au](http://www.commcarelink.health.gov.au)  
1800 052 222

### Queensland Health 13HEALTH Service

[www.health.qld.gov.au/13HEALTH](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/13HEALTH)  
13HEALTH (13 43 25 84)

### Seniors Enquiry Line

[www.seniorenquiryline.com.au](http://www.seniorenquiryline.com.au)  
1300 135 500

### Disability Information Service

[www.disability.qld.gov.au/disability\\_information](http://www.disability.qld.gov.au/disability_information)  
1800 177 120

# Carer Recognition Policy

## Other useful contacts for carers

The following contacts are included to assist carers. This is not intended to be a complete list.

### Government contacts

#### Adult Guardian

[www.justice.qld.gov.au/guardian](http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/guardian)  
1300 653 187

#### Back to Work: parents and carers program

[www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au](http://www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au)  
1300 369 935

#### Centrelink – Disability, Sickness and Carers Line

[www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)  
13 27 17

#### Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian

[www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au](http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au)  
1800 688 275

#### Commonwealth Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FACSIA)

[www.facsia.gov.au](http://www.facsia.gov.au)  
1300 653 227

#### Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing

[www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)  
1800 020 103

#### Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs

[www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au)  
13 32 54

#### Home and Community Care (HACC)

[www.health.qld.gov.au/hacc](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/hacc)  
3131 6802

#### Queensland Government Concessions

[www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/concessions](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/concessions)  
1800 460 849

### Non-government contacts

#### Alzheimer's Association of Queensland Resource Centre

[www.alzheimersonline.org](http://www.alzheimersonline.org)  
3857 4043

#### Association for Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill (ARAFMI) Queensland

[www.arafmiqld.org](http://www.arafmiqld.org)  
1800 351 881

#### Autism Queensland

[www.autismqld.com.au](http://www.autismqld.com.au)  
3273 0000

#### Brain Injury Association of Queensland

[www.biaq.com.au](http://www.biaq.com.au)  
1800 673 074

#### Brisbane Domestic Violence Advocacy Service

[www.dvrc.org.au](http://www.dvrc.org.au)  
3217 2544

#### Cancer Help Line

[www.qldcancer.com.au](http://www.qldcancer.com.au)  
13 11 20

#### Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland

[www.cplqld.org.au](http://www.cplqld.org.au)  
3358 8011

#### Deaf Services Queensland

[www.deafservicesqld.org.au](http://www.deafservicesqld.org.au)  
3892 8500

#### Dementia Help Line

[www.alzheimersonline.org](http://www.alzheimersonline.org)  
1800 639 331

#### Down Syndrome Association of Queensland

[www.dsaq.org.au](http://www.dsaq.org.au)  
3356 6655



## Non-government contacts

### Gynaecological Cancer Society

[www.gcsau.org](http://www.gcsau.org)  
1800 700 288

### Kids Help Line

[www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)  
1800 551 800

### Lifeline Community Care Queensland

[www.lccq.org.au](http://www.lccq.org.au)  
13 11 14

### Mental Illness Fellowship of North Queensland

[www.mifnq.org.au](http://www.mifnq.org.au)  
1800 455 455

### Multiple Sclerosis Society of Queensland

[www.msaustralia.org.au](http://www.msaustralia.org.au)  
1800 177 591

### National Continence Help Line

[www.continence.org.au](http://www.continence.org.au)  
1800 33 00 66

### Palliative Care Information Service

[www.pcis.org.au](http://www.pcis.org.au)  
1800 772 273

### Parkinson's Queensland

[www.parkinsons-qld.org.au](http://www.parkinsons-qld.org.au)  
1800 644 189

### Queensland Aged and Disability Advocacy

[www.qada.org.au](http://www.qada.org.au)  
1800 818 338

### SANE Help Line

[www.sane.org](http://www.sane.org)  
[www.itsallright.org](http://www.itsallright.org)  
1800 18SANE (7263)

### The Schizophrenia Fellowship of Queensland

[www.sfq.org.au](http://www.sfq.org.au)  
3358 4424

### Spinal Injuries Association

[www.spinal.com.au](http://www.spinal.com.au)  
3391 2044

### Spiritus

[www.spiritus.org.au](http://www.spiritus.org.au)  
3421 2800

### Stroke Association of Queensland

[www.strokeqld.org.au](http://www.strokeqld.org.au)  
3277 3838

### Women's Infolink

[www.women.qld.gov.au](http://www.women.qld.gov.au)  
1800 177 577

