

Developing the NSW Carers Strategy
Have Your Say online consultation
Report – March 2014



NSW Carers Strategy

Contents

About the survey	3
Who completed the survey.....	3
1. Employment	5
2. Education	6
3. Health and Wellbeing	7
4. Carer Information.....	8
5. Community Awareness	9
6. Carer Engagement.....	10
7. Aboriginal carers	11
Contact us	12

About the survey

- The NSW Carers Survey online consultation was open on the NSW Government's *Have Your Say* website from 10 February – 7 March 2014.
- Structured around focus areas (see next page) important to carers.
- Single option survey format asked people to select one option.
- The addition of a comment box allowed for any additional information to be provided - we received more than 1800 comments.
- Many people (11%) used comments to indicate they supported all options.

Who completed the survey

- 2,362 responses
- 83% or 1,966 responses were from individuals
- 17% or 396 responses were from people who answered on behalf of their organisation.

Individuals

- **83% female** and 17% male
- **58.3% carers**; 11.4% former carers; 2.1% carer and care recipient; 2% care recipient; 26.2% none of these.
- 3.9% Aboriginal; 18.7% multicultural/culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD).
- **54.6% metropolitan**; 30% regional; 13.8% rural; 1.6% remote.
- 3.5% under 25 years; 26.9% 26-44 years; **58.6% 45-64 years**; 11% 65+ years.

Organisations

- **47.5% non-government organisation**; 23.1% state government; 9.2% carer support group; 5.6% local government; 4.7% community group; 4.4% other; 3.6% private company; 1.9% federal government.
- Most of the organisations were **service providers** (59.7%).

Table 1: Survey Questions (with most important bolded)

FOCUS AREAS	PROPOSED PRIORITIES
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers are helped to create carer-friendly workplaces by an Employers for Carers Network Recognition of the skills carers gain through their caring role, for possible credit in future training Formal strategies to help carers return to work after a break in employment Support services for care recipients that enable carers to work
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An education system that helps young people to identify as carers and then supports them An App (mobile application) to help young carers find information and support Raise awareness of young carers through social media Mentoring programs for young carers, especially to support the move from high school into work or further education
Health & Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal supports for carers, for example peer support groups and carer specific counselling and mental wellbeing programs Building carer friendly communities eg accessible and inclusive public venues and spaces and carer discounts Improving carer access to healthy living and recreational programs, eg flexible and inclusive respite options for carers Carer aware health services, eg free health screening for carers through pharmacies and initiatives to increase carers' engagement with general practice
Carer Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer support network for carers Stronger role for medical and other staff supporting the care recipient to link carers to information at the earliest possible opportunity New Apps (mobile applications for phones and tablets) to link carers to local services and relevant information Carers get information and support at the earliest possible opportunity, including when contacting medical staff and organisations specialising in information about the care recipient Government agencies provide quality information & services that better meet the needs of carers Online information is easy for carers to access, for example a carer tab on websites to group information together
Community Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New ways to recognise carers, for example carer ambassadors Media partners develop innovative ways to raise the profile of carers in the community Greater mainstream media coverage of carer stories, including newspaper, radio, television and online Make better use of Carers Week to raise awareness of carers
Carer Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better recognition of carers through a formal carer engagement framework for NSW that builds on the NSW Carers (Recognition) Act and its Charter Involve carers in the planning and delivery of frontline services to their loved one Training and support for carers to have input into programs and policy at the local or statewide level
Aboriginal carers (open questions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is good for Aboriginal carers? What is one thing that could be done to make things better for Aboriginal carers?

1. Employment

Proposed priorities	% selected as most important	
	Carers	All
Support services for care recipients that enable carers to work	45.9	47.1
Employers are helped to create carer-friendly workplaces by an Employers for Carers network	26.1	23.9
Recognition of the skills carers gain through their caring role, for possible credit in future training	13.6	14.7
Formal strategies to help carers return to work after a break in employment	8.4	9.4
I don't wish to comment	6.0	4.9

497 people left comments about employment, broadly supporting the priorities above and about these themes:

- Carers need additional leave to cover work absences related to caring
- Carers want their employers and colleagues to understand the caring role and that flexibility will help them to juggle caring and employment.
- Carers would like career options, not just jobs.
- Services that help carers to work need to be affordable, otherwise there is no point working.
- Employed carers struggle financially with reduced hours of work and reduced superannuation accumulation.

“...Need acceptance by employers and government that carers needing time off to care in emergency situations is not an indication of lack of commitment to the workplace...”

- Survey #1,562

2. Education

Proposed priorities	% selected as most important	
	Carers	All
An education system that helps young people to identify as carers and then supports them	46.3	48.7
Mentoring programs for young carers, especially to support the move from high school into work or further education	35.9	36.6
An App (mobile application) to help young carers find information and support	5.8	6.0
Raise awareness of young carers through social media	3.9	3.4
I don't wish to comment	8.1	5.2

271 people left comments about education, broadly supporting the priorities above and about these themes:

- Mentoring (social, emotional and financial support) should guide and support young carers in all areas of life not just education
- Young carers need easy and discreet access to whatever support they need to help them with their caring role.

“I never had support as a carer when I was doing Year 11 in 1976. As a result I was forced to drop out of school and seek employment”

- Survey #820

3. Health and Wellbeing

Proposed priorities	% selected as most important	
	Carers	All
Improving carer access to healthy living and recreational programs, eg flexible and inclusive respite options for carers	39.6	40.1
Personal supports for carers, for example peer support groups and carer specific counselling and mental wellbeing programs	32.0	33.3
Building carer friendly communities eg accessible and inclusive public venues and spaces and carer discounts	13.4	12.8
Carer aware health services, for example free health screening for carers through pharmacies and initiatives to increase carers' engagement with general practice	12.7	11.8
I don't wish to comment	2.4	2.0

353 people left comments about health and wellbeing broadly supporting the above and about these themes:

- There was concern about the affordability of health and wellbeing services.
- Many carers put the needs of the care recipient before their own health and wellbeing.

“...these supports must fit into their current daily routines so as not to become something extra they have to do in their already busy day”

- Survey #1,371

4. Carer Information

Proposed priorities	% selected as most important	
	Carers	All
Carers get information and support at the earliest possible opportunity, including when contacting medical staff and organisations specialising in information about the care recipient	37.3	41.2
Government agencies provide quality information and services that better meet the needs of carers	24.6	21.4
Stronger role for medical and other staff supporting the care recipient to link carers to information at the earliest possible opportunity	16.8	16.9
Online information is easy for carers to access, for example a carer tab on websites to group information together	7.5	6.5
Peer support networks for carers	6.9	7.5
New Apps (mobile applications for phones and tablets) to link carers to local services and relevant information	4.5	4.8
I don't wish to comment	2.4	1.8

A total of 288 comments were received about carer information, broadly supporting the above and about these themes:

- There being a role for medical and other staff to help carers understand what help they can get and how to access it.
- Need for early access to information irrespective of which professional or service they are in contact with.
- Information is needed at different times and in different ways - as not all carers can use or afford the internet.
- Government agencies have a role to provide accurate, up-to-date information relevant to carers and the people they care for.

“Staff need to not only link carers to information but to also follow up with them and or offer to refer them to supports. Often carers are given information at time of crisis and they forget about it or are reluctant to bother anyone or think that others are more needy”

- Survey #1,911

5. Community Awareness

Proposed priorities	% selected as most important	
	Carers	All
Greater mainstream media coverage of carer stories, including newspaper, radio, television and online	40.2	42.1
Media partners develop innovative ways to raise the profile of carers in the community	25.7	28.9
Make better use of Carers Week to raise awareness of carers	14.9	12.2
New ways to recognise carers, for example carer ambassadors	13.7	12.1
I don't wish to comment	5.5	4.7

A total of 234 comments were received about community awareness broadly supporting the above and about these themes:

- More than one in five comments questioned the benefit to carers of raising their profile in the community and demonstrated a preference for limited funding to be used on support services for carers; awareness raising in local communities, schools and workplaces; reducing hospital waiting lists; ensuring care arrangements are sustainable; addressing financial stress; reducing the stigma associated with disability and mental illness; and educating medical professionals and service providers to work with carers as partners in care.
- While there was great support for mainstream media raising the profile of carers (14.5%), media partners were thought to be more capable of developing strategies to promote carers in a positive and innovative way.
- A number of people had not heard of Carers Week or believed that one week a year is insufficient, especially as caring is often a full time workload.

“Highlighting the role of carers in the media, will serve to normalise the role, place a value on the work that carers do and hopefully proffer a respect from all levels of community”

- Survey #1,383

6. Carer Engagement

Proposed priorities	% selected as most important	
	Carers	All
Involve carers in the planning and delivery of frontline services to their loved one	52.7	52.4
Training and support for carers to have input into programs and policy at the local or statewide level	22.7	23.4
Better recognition of carers through a formal carer engagement framework for NSW that builds on the NSW Carers (Recognition) Act and its Charter	22.2	22.3
I don't wish to comment	2.4	1.9

A total of 215 comments were received about engagement broadly supporting the above and about these themes:

- A large number of comments told us about good and bad personal experiences either with consultation or engaging with services.
- Some commented that carers don't have the time or energy to be engaged.
- Carers support consultation, but need to see that their input is listened to and acted on to prevent the consultation from further disengaging them.

“PLEASE make this meaningful and not just another piece of paper with fancy words”

- Survey # 1,911

7. Aboriginal carers

People who identified in the survey as Aboriginal were asked two questions.

- 66 individuals and 18 organisations identified as Aboriginal.
- 75 free text responses – 51.5% from carers.

“Caring is a traditional value of our community and the responsibility of all our families”

- Survey # 1,033

Question 1 - What is good for Aboriginal carers?

- Support from services and within communities, especially flexible carer support services.
- Services that ask what help is needed.
- Aboriginal workers.
- Information that shows a clear understanding of Aboriginal culture.

Question 2 - What is one thing that could be done to make things better for Aboriginal carers?

- More than 45% of responses referred to the need for more support, specifically help and assistance, advocacy and information about available services.
- The value of information being filtered through local Aboriginal networks, better coordination of services, flexibility and more services in rural and remote areas were all raised multiple times.
- Many people also mentioned the importance of Aboriginal culture, specifically having access to workers who understand the culture, are non-judgemental, respectful and listen.

Aboriginal people’s responses to the other survey questions largely reflected the views of non-Aboriginal survey respondents, except in the areas of employment and education, where they identified the most important proposed priorities as:

- Employment – Employers are helped to create carer-friendly workplaces by an Employers for Carers network.
- Education - Mentoring programs for young carers, especially to support the move from high school into work or further education.

Contact us



Level 5, 83 Clarence St
Sydney NSW 2000



(02) 9248 0870



carerstrategy@facss.nsw.gov.au



www.carers.nsw.gov.au

Department of Family and Community
Services

Level 5, 83 Clarence Street, SYDNEY
NSW 2000

Phone (02) 9377 6000

TTY (02) 9377 6167

Email carerstrategy@facs.nsw.gov.au

Web www.adhc.nsw.gov.au

March2014

