

# A guide to the *Carers Recognition Act*

## Northern Territory Carers Charter

# 2006



# questions

## Frequently asked questions

### What is the *Carers Recognition Act*?

The Act requires services to consider the needs and roles of carers in the services they provide.

### How does the Act work?

The Act requires Government and funded Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) to abide by the Northern Territory Carers Charter.

The Charter says that carers must be treated with respect and dignity, their caring role considered and their own needs acknowledged.

### Who is a carer under the Act?

A carer is anyone who provides **unpaid** ongoing care or assistance to a person with a disability, a chronic illness, including a mental illness, or who is frail and needs assistance with everyday tasks.

**Many people can be carers including spouses, parents, children and friends.**

### Who has responsibilities under the Act?

All Northern Territory (NT) Government Agencies and all NGOs funded by the NT Government to provide relevant services.

### What do Government and other service providers need to do under the Act?

Providers need to take all practicable measures to ensure staff:

- > have an awareness and understanding of the NT Carers Charter
- > act in accordance with the NT Carers Charter in the provision of relevant services of the organisation
- > consult with carers and those who may represent carers, regarding program development and strategic/operational planning that is relevant to carers and the persons in their care.



## **How will the NT Government know the Act is working?**

NT Government (NTG) Agencies are required to provide an annual report on their compliance with the Act, including a report on funded NGOs compliance with the NT Carers Charter.

A practical way for NGOs to show compliance is through NTG Agencies established reporting tools, such as a Service Plan and/or Performance Report.

The NTG Agency's report may be combined with its Annual Report.

## **What can carers do if they think the Act has not been followed?**

If you have a complaint that you wish to be resolved, contact the service directly either in person, by phone or in writing. In most cases, the problem can be resolved at this point.

If the complaint is still unresolved, contact the Health and Community Services Complaints Commission on 1800 806 380 (toll free).

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### **Further information**

#### **Aged and Disability Services**

Department of Health and Community Services

Phone: (08) 8999 2809

#### **Carers NT Inc**

Phone: (08) 8948 4877

The Act is available at [www.nt.gov.au/dcm/legislation](http://www.nt.gov.au/dcm/legislation)



# Northern Territory Carers Charter

- 1 Carers must be treated with respect and dignity.
- 2 Carers must be acknowledged as individuals with their own needs within and beyond the role of carer.
- 3 The diversity of carers' individual needs must be acknowledged and identified, taking into consideration cultural and linguistic differences, age, disability, religion, socioeconomic status, gender identification and where people live. In particular, it is important to recognise the needs of Aboriginal carers and children and young people who are carers.
- 4 Carers must receive information on their rights when dealing with Agencies.
- 5 The role of carers must be formally recognised by including carers in the assessment, planning, delivery and review of services that impact on them and their caring role.
- 6 The views and needs of carers must be taken into account along with the views, needs and best interests of people receiving care when decisions are made that impact on carers and their caring role.
- 7 Programs and services for carers must be responsive, coordinated and appropriate.
- 8 Complaints made by carers about services that impact on them and the role of carers must be properly considered.

Schedule as per *Carers Recognition Act 2006*.

