

Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety

Recognising carers in Queensland: Understanding the *Carers (Recognition) Act 2008*

Introduction

The Queensland Government, through the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety, is reviewing the [Carers \(Recognition\) Act 2008](#) (the Act).

The Act was introduced to recognise the role of unpaid carers, ensure carers are included in decisions that affect them, and acknowledge the benefits that carers provide to the Queensland community (both economic and social).

It also created the Queensland Carers Advisory Council (QCAC) and the Queensland Carers Charter (Carers Charter) to guide Queensland Government agencies on recognising and considering the views of carers.

Who is a carer?

When we use the term '**carer**' in this paper we are referring to a carer as defined under the Act.

The Act says a carer is someone who provides, in a non-contractual and unpaid capacity, **ongoing care or assistance to another person who**, because of disability, frailty, chronic illness or pain, **requires assistance with everyday tasks.**

A grandparent is recognised as a carer if their grandchild lives with them, and the grandparent is the primary caregiver and decision maker for the child.

Under the Act, a person **is not recognised as a carer** simply because they are a spouse, parent or guardian, or because they provide care as a volunteer for a voluntary organisation.

Purpose and focus of the review

The purpose of the review is to help us understand if the Act appropriately recognises, promotes the inclusion of carers and supports the role of carers.

The review will look at issues such as:

- how the Act recognises carers across Queensland;
- making sure the Act is up to date and working well;
- the role and functions of QCAC; and
- making sure the Carers Charter is meeting community expectations.

We want feedback on these issues from important groups, including from carers and organisations that support or work with carers.

The review will also consider research and findings from other reports and reviews. We know many carers in Queensland have already dedicated time to sharing their experiences and views, including about their caring roles and the impacts of caring. These findings will help us to better understand challenges carers face.

While there are many issues impacting carers, the review is only focused on **what is covered by the Act (the legislation)**. This means the review will **not** be looking at things like funding for carer support services, access to financial support (relief or subsidies), and broader challenges impacting on caring, such as housing affordability or cost-of-living pressures.

Participating in the review

This consultation paper includes questions which will help us understand carers' experiences and perspectives on the Act. We also invite feedback from people supported by carers.

We invite you to share views, insights, and ideas.

Whether you choose to answer one question or several, your contribution will play a vital role in shaping the future of the Act.

Your views are important in helping us to ensure the Act is effectively helping carers.

How to provide feedback

You can provide your feedback by **19 June 2026** via:

1. **Email to Carersact@families.qld.gov.au (preferred), or**
2. Mail to:

Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety

Attention: Strategic Policy (Child and Family)

Locked Bag 3405

Brisbane QLD 4001

You do not have to answer all questions.

Your responses and personal details will be confidential. Summaries of all feedback provided may be published. Please let us know in your response, if there is any information you do not want referenced in any publication.

Consultation paper and questions

Part 1: Preliminary

Purpose of the Act

The first part of the Act explains that the purpose of the Act is to:

- recognise the important contributions carers make to those they care for and the community;
- make sure carers' interests are considered when decisions are made about services that affect their role; and
- establish QCAC to promote the interests of carers.

This part also defines the meaning of 'carer' and introduces the Carers Charter.

As discussed above, when answering the questions it is important to understand that the Act does not deal with direct support such as respite care, financial help, or access to services.

Consultation questions:

1. Before this consultation paper, were you aware of the Act and its purpose in recognising carers?
2. Do you think the Act has helped the community, including government and non-government organisations, understand the role of carers and the contributions carers make?

Queensland Carers Charter

The Carers Charter is an important part of the Act outlining principles to support carers. Its purpose is to help carers to be heard by the Queensland Government and better understood by the community.

The Carers Charter is included at the end of this paper. It contains 13 principles that recognise:

- Carers' effort and dedication, and the vital service they provide (principle 1)
- Carers deserve respect from our community and support from government (principle 2);

- Carers and the people they care for should be considered and consulted on decisions that affect them (principles 3 and 4);
- Complaints made by carers in relation to services that impact them must be considered (principle 5);
- Carers' should be recognised for their unique knowledge and experience and as individuals with their own needs (principle 6);
- The relationship between a carer and the person they care for should be respected and honoured (principle 7);
- Carers need a wide range of responsive and affordable services to support them in their caring role (principle 12); and
- Some carer groups face unique challenges or difficulties and require specific supports, including young carers, grandparent carers and carers who live in rural and remote locations (8, 9, 10, 11 and 13).

These principles are meant to make sure carers have a voice in shaping the services and policies that affect them. They are also meant to promote greater awareness and understanding of carers roles and needs and help ensure carers are treated with respect.

The Act says that all public authorities (a Queensland Government department or 'statutory body', such as the Public Guardian or Public Trustee) should understand and promote the principles of the Carers Charter, including when providing services which affect carers and the people they care for (see **Part 2** below).

Consultation questions:

3. How would you like the support carers provide to friends, family or others to be recognised?
4. How do you think the Carers Charter could be changed to help the community better understand issues that are important to carers?
5. Do you think the Carers Charter reflects the experiences and needs of all groups of carers?

Part 2: Decisions affecting carers

Obligations on public authorities

This part of the Act requires public authorities to make sure their employees **understand** the Carers Charter and **reflect** the principles when delivering services which affect carers.

Public authorities must also keep the Carers Charter in mind when making workplace **policies** that affect employees who are carers.

This part of the Act also says public authorities must **consult** with organisations that represent carers when making policy and service delivery decisions that affect carers and the people they care for.

While public authorities are expected to comply, these obligations are not legally enforceable.

Consultation questions:

6. Do you think this part of the Act does enough to make sure public authorities consult with carer bodies and follow the Carers Charter?
7. What changes would you like to see in the Act to feel that your needs as a carer are being recognised and considered?

Part 3: Queensland Carers Advisory Council

This part of the Act describes the role of QCAC, which includes to:

- advance carers' interests;
- promote compliance with the Carers Charter; and
- provide advice and recommendations to the Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence on matters relating to carers.

This part also explains QCAC membership, how meetings are run and how the Minister can direct QCAC to perform its functions.

QCAC has twelve members appointed by the Minister for two-year terms. The members are:

- four carers, with one who is a grandparent carer;
- three representatives from carer associations;
- one representative from a grandparent carer association; and
- four representatives from different Queensland Government departments.

More information about QCAC can be found at: www.families.qld.gov.au/our-work/carers/queensland-carers-advisory-council.

Consultation questions:

8. Are you aware of QCAC and its role in advancing carer recognition and the interests of carers?
9. Is there anything else you think QCAC should be able to do to better support carers in Queensland?
10. Do you have any other feedback about the way QCAC is set up or its membership?

Additional questions: Overall effectiveness of the Act

These questions ask you how well the Act raises awareness of carers' roles and recognises the contributions carers make to the individuals they care for and the Queensland community.

Consultation questions:

11. Think about your experiences interacting with services in the broader care sector in Queensland. Do you think these services understand and recognise your role as a carer?
12. Is there anything else you think should be changed in the Act to support or increase the recognition of carers?
13. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the Act that have not already been covered?

Appendix 1: The Queensland Carers Charter

Because:

- the Parliament recognises that carers make a significant contribution to the people they care for and the economic and social wellbeing of the community, and that carers deserve recognition, respect and support for their role as carers; and
- grandparents who are carers for their grandchildren make a significant contribution to the lives of their grandchildren and deserve respect and support for their role as carers; and
- helping carers is one of the best ways of helping someone they are caring for and the carers charter will help carers to be heard by government and their issues to be better understood in the community;

this Act establishes the following Queensland carers charter:

1. The State recognises the effort and dedication of carers in our community and that carers provide a vital service.
2. Carers deserve the respect of our community and should be supported within their community by all levels of government, institutions and organisations.
3. The views and needs of carers must be taken into account together with the views, needs and best interests of the people they care for when making policy decisions.
4. The importance of carers' work means the role of carers should be recognised by including carers, or their representative bodies, in the assessment, planning, delivery and review of services affecting carers.
5. Complaints made by carers in relation to services that impact on them must be given careful consideration.
6. Carers should be recognised—
 - a. for their unique knowledge and experience; and
 - b. as individuals with their own needs.
7. The relationship between a carer and the person they care for should be respected and honoured.

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8. Children and young people who are carers should be specifically supported by all of our community.
 9. The caring responsibilities of children and young people should be minimised.
 10. Grandparents who are carers for their grandchildren, after having raised their own children, should be supported in their important and challenging role.
 11. Grandparents who are carers for their grandchildren need easy access to information that is clear and relevant to their role as a carer.
 12. Carers need access to a wide range of responsive and affordable services to support them and their decision making in their role as a carer.
 13. Remote and rurally based carers face additional difficulties caused by isolation.