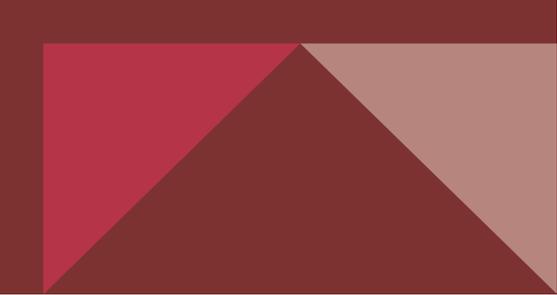




THE VICTORIAN CHARTER
SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN
CARE RELATIONSHIPS



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THE VICTORIAN CHARTER SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN CARE RELATIONSHIPS

Carers and the people they care for are the basis of the care relationship. A strong relationship has benefits for the carer and the person being cared for.

The *Victorian charter supporting people in care relationships* encourages care organisations and services to better respect the important role carers play in our community.

From 1 July 2012, Victoria has legislation that acknowledges the role of carers in our community. The *Carers Recognition Act 2012* recognises, promotes and values the role of people in care relationships, recognising differing needs and promoting the benefits that care relationships bring.

The *Victorian charter supporting people in care relationships* has been updated to reflect and support the Act.

The Victorian charter supporting people in care relationships

As a carer, you can expect to:

- > be respected and recognised
 - as an individual with your own needs
 - as a carer
 - as someone with special knowledge of the person in your care
- > be supported as an individual and as a carer, including during changes to the care relationship
- > be recognised for your efforts and dedication as a carer and for the social and economic contribution to the community arising from your role as a carer
- > if appropriate, have your views and cultural identity taken into account, together with the views, cultural identity, needs and best interests of the person for whom you care, in matters relating to the care relationship, including when decisions are made that impact on the carer and the care relationship
- > have your social wellbeing and health recognised in matters relating to the care relationship
- > have considered in decision making the effect of being a carer on your participation in employment and education.

As a person being cared for, you can expect to:

- > be respected, recognised and supported as an individual and as a person in a care relationship, including during changes to the care relationship
- > have your views taken into account, together with your needs, cultural identity and best interests, in how you are cared for
- > have your changing needs considered and taken into account in how you are cared for.

What does the charter mean for people in care relationships?

People in care relationships should:

- > have their care relationship respected and honoured
- > if appropriate, have their views considered in the assessment, planning, delivery, management and review of services affecting them and the care relationship.

How do you know if you are in a care relationship?

Carers and the people they care for can be adults, young people or children, and from any cultural or geographical background. You are in a care relationship if the person being cared for is an older person, or a person with a disability, a mental illness or an ongoing medical condition.

Each care relationship has different needs and challenges, and anyone may find themselves in a care relationship at any stage of their lives.

People in care relationships deserve to be recognised and supported. Support begins with protecting rights.

Why support people in care relationships?

Care relationships should be supported so the health and wellbeing of the carer, the person needing care and the relationship are sustained. Carers and the people they care for should be as healthy and content as possible. Caring can be a tough job, so supporting carers can make a big difference to their lives, and the lives of the people they care for. While the needs of carers and the needs of those being cared for are different, supporting the care relationship brings benefits to both.

If care relationships are better supported, carers and those receiving care are more likely to take part in planning and managing care. They can also help with ideas about how services can be improved.

The Carers Recognition Act and the *Victorian charter supporting people in care relationships* help bring greater recognition, respect and support to people in care relationships. Putting the Act and charter into practice means different things for different people.

How are rights of people in care relationships protected?

Rights are protected in several ways. The Act means State government departments, councils, and organisations funded by government to provide programs and services to people in care relationships have to respect and recognise the vital role that carers play in our community. State government departments, councils and funded organisations bound by the Act have to consider the principles in the Act, and reflect them when providing support for people in care relationships.

The *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities* is a law about freedoms, rights and responsibilities. State government and councils have to consider the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities* when making laws, setting policies and providing services. The human rights charter includes freedom of speech and religion, freedom of association, and rights to a fair trial and equality before the law. It includes the responsibility to respect other people's rights, such as letting others speak.

The Carers Recognition Act and the *Victorian charter supporting people in care relationships* are about the people in the relationship. People in care relationships can expect to be:

- > recognised and respected
- > supported
- > encouraged to take part in care planning and making decisions about care.

Care relationships should be recognised, respected and supported by:

- > having community, health and other care organisations and agencies that support the carer, the person needing care, and the care relationship. These include:
 - mental health, disability services and aged care services, and
 - funded care agencies providing home based care services to children and young people in foster, kinship and permanent care arrangements.
- > helping all Victorians, whatever their background or culture, to find information, support and services they need in ways that are easily understood
- > encouraging carers and people being cared for to get involved in planning and developing services
- > improving support for carers by raising community awareness about the importance of the carer role.

What do the Carers Recognition Act and charter mean for funded organisations that provide support?

The Act and charter should guide the development of policies and delivery of services to:

- > provide services that suit the cultural identity of the carer and the person being cared for
- > provide services that meet the unique and changing needs of people in care relationships
- > support the care relationship itself
- > monitor and test how well service providers support people in care relationships.

What do the Carers Recognition Act and charter mean for State government and councils?

State government and councils use the Carers Recognition Act and charter to guide:

- > carer friendly workplaces in state government departments and councils
- > development of policies, funding and services to better support care relationships
- > how programs and services are developed for supporting care relationships and how they are put into action
- > other work to support care relationships.

State government, councils and funded organisations, that are responsible for developing or providing policies, programs or services that affect people in care relationships, have to report publicly on their compliance with their obligations under the Act in their annual reports.

Want to know more?

For information about support services for people in care relationships, contact Carers Victoria on **1800 242 636** or Commonwealth Respite and CareLink Centres on **1800 052 222**.

To read a copy of the Carers Recognition Act, or download a copy of the *Victorian charter supporting people in care relationships*, visit www.dhs.vic.gov.au/carersact

For information about your rights see the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act* – www.justice.vic.gov.au/humanrights

For *Charter for parents and carers of young people who use a CAMHS* (child and adolescent mental health services), Kids' Rights – www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/camhs/

For the *Charter for children in out-of-home care* – www.dhs.vic.gov.au

Building eQuality in the Workplace: Family responsibilities – guidelines for employers and employees outlines answers and processes for considering flexible work arrangements for both parents and carers – www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au

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