

Carer Advocacy Action Plan

2026 – 2030



About Carers SA

Carers SA is the peak body for Carers in South Australia. Raising the voice of Carers, recognition of Carers, their rights, wellbeing and needs is at the heart of Carers SA's efforts. We persistently advocate across governments, health and social services and systems, business and communities to prioritise appropriate and meaningful support and services for Carers. Carers SA aims to ensure that Carers' needs, wishes, values and perspectives are elevated and able to inform and influence decision-making by government, service providers, policy makers, legislators and systems and services to improve the lives and wellbeing of Carers in South Australia.

Carers SA is both the advocacy peak body and the lead Carer Gateway provider in South Australia. We receive funding from state and federal governments to provide Carer services. This provides us with a unique opportunity to understand the needs of Carers and identify and implement ways to improve the services they need and use. It enables us to engage with many and diverse Carers across South Australia through our broad networks and through services and supports and in so doing, positions Carers SA to raise awareness of issues facing Carers and raise the voice of Carers to inform and influence policy and decision-making about things that impact them.



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Recognising and Acknowledging Carers

Carers are family and kinship relationships, friends and neighbours who take on the responsibility of providing ongoing unpaid care and assistance to one or more people who need support to maintain their health, wellbeing and independence. This may be due to disability, chronic or severe illness or injury, mental ill health, or due to frailty.

Carers are represented across diverse communities, groups, intersectionality, relationships and social factors that create intersecting and overlapping forms of marginalisation, discrimination and additional barriers to navigating and accessing the services and supports they need. Understanding Carers lived experience enables more inclusive systems and policies and provides for more targeted services that increase access and reduce inequity.

Acknowledgment of Country

Carers SA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of all the lands on which we meet, work and live. We recognise that this land has and always will be First Nations land. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present and recognise the cultural and linguistic strength, diversity and continual connection with the land, waters and community.

At Carers SA we acknowledge the history and current realities of First Nations peoples and understand our individual and collective responsibility towards creating inclusive, culturally safe advocacy. We commit to learning from the knowledge, traditions, stories, spirituality and experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Carers.

Our Advocacy Action Plan and our advocacy work will build the context of cultural, social structures, individual lived experience into Carer resources, policy, recognition and rights approaches and strategies. Carers SA's Care Advocacy Action Plan will align with our Innovate RAP.



Our Aim in Advocacy

Our advocacy aims to enable Carers to

- Have their voices heard on issues that are important to them
- Defend and safeguard their rights
- Be a partner in decision-making that impacts them and the people they care for
- Contribute to shared planning and problem solving to improve the lives of Carers

The way we advocate embeds elements of social advocacy. We do this by

- Taking positive and ethical action
- Building the capacity of individuals to self-advocate and we advocate on their behalf to assist them in raising their own voice
- Building the capacity of the sector to improve the services they provide
- Being consistent over time
- Actively identifying actual and potential conflicts of interest to ensure we remain transparent and accountable
- Focusing on the fundamental needs, rights and interests of Carers
- Advocating with effort, energy and enthusiasm and
- Actively collaborating and partnering with other stakeholders to improve the lives of Carers

Our Priorities for Advocacy

We prioritise our advocacy strategies where issues

- Are identified as of priority, need or special interest by Carers
- Are a risk or threat to the rights, safety and wellbeing of Carers
- Are an emerging concern for Carers
- Directly impact Carers in South Australia
- Are of national and/or cross jurisdictional concern and priority and should be considered in conjunction with Carers Australia and other National Carer Network organisations



Why it is important

Carers SA's Advocacy Action Plan provides a structured, evidence-informed roadmap to guide our advocacy work over the next five years. It is a long-term strategy to ensure that the voices, rights, wellbeing and needs of all Carers, including specific priority groups are consistently elevated in policy and decision-making forums with government and service systems.

For Carers, the Advocacy Action Plan strengthens their collective lived experience, voice and representation; works to embed partnering with Carers across sectors and services; works to develop tangible strategies and processes to support Carers access and equity to and across services and sectors; promotes greater recognition of the contribution Carers make to the community; builds Carers' capacity to navigate systems; and ensures their involvement in planning and decision-making in areas that impact them.

For government, a clear Advocacy Action Plan provides reliable, evidence-based insight into Carers' priorities and the importance and impact of such advocacy in informing government policy. In implementing this Advocacy Action Plan, Carers SA will continue to find opportunities to work in partnership with the SA government departments and agencies to improve the lives of Carers in South Australia.

This Advocacy Action Plan outlines 7 priority areas, 27 actions and 36 discrete projects that will form the focus and direction of Carers SA's systemic advocacy and policy work for the next five years.



How Carers Inform our Advocacy

We collaborate with Carers to ensure our work is informed by Carers lived experience. We engage with Carers to inform our advocacy practices, policy priorities, services and how we respond to government, funders and other policy makers. Partnering with Carers drives our advocacy and how we respond to and inform government, funders and policy makers. It recognises that Carers, through their lived experience, are credible witnesses and can identify risks, gaps and inequities. Partnering with Carers leads to more focused problem-solving, more responsive services and improves outcomes for Carers.

Carers shared their lived experience, insights, feedback and ideas in contributing to this Advocacy Action Plan. The actions outlined in this Action Plan have been informed through a broad range of

sources. The priority areas and actions were then codesigned with our Carer Advisory Committee.

Carer Advocates on our Register and Carer Panels provided invaluable feedback to help in determining the Actions. These Actions were further informed through our data and through feedback from Carers including state and national surveys, research and via our research partnerships, Carer issues and specific concerns helps Carer SA identifying patterns, trends, gaps and key priority issues for our advocacy work.

Oversight of the implementation of the Action Plan is the responsibility of Carers SA's Carer Advisory Committee. The implementation of the Action Plan forms the structure of our deliverables to the Department of Human Services under our funding through the Advocacy and Impact Program.





Strategic Alignment

Our Advocacy Action Plan aligns with and responds to

Carers SA Strategic Plan 2026-2029

Strategy 1 Engage: Carers are heard, connected, and can access the right supports at the right time - shaping what we do and how we deliver services.

- Enhance engagement with Carers across metropolitan, regional and priority communities, including under-represented groups - both directly and through trusted partner organisations who know those communities well.

Strategy 2 Advocacy and Impact: Carers' collective voices influence policy, service systems and broader community attitudes and understanding of carers – and improve the supports Carers receive.

- 2.1 Concentrate our systemic advocacy strategies and actions for Carers, at state and federal levels, on priority areas that are most likely to have positive impact and drive change.
- 2.2 Build on our profile and reputation as South Australia's peak Carer organisation so that we are widely recognised and respected for our visible work with and for Carers and our partner organisations grounded in lived experience and service delivery insights.
- 2.3 Develop and sustain strategic partnerships that ensure advocacy is guided by the insights and experiences of Carers, strengthens the capability of Carers and partner organisations and supports organisations to identify, engage with and advocate on.

Carers Recognition Act 2005 (SA) new amendments in effect 1 July 2025

Schedule 1: South Australian Carers Charter

A Carer should be recognised and valued for

- their vital role in South Australian society, delivering significant social benefits to individuals, their families and the broader community
- their significant economic contribution which supports the effective operation of the health and aged care systems their significant personal sacrifices, forgoing careers, social lives, education and financial security to care for others, which can impact their mental and physical wellbeing
- the skills they gain through caring which are valuable and transferable to the workforce.

National Carer Strategy 2024-2034 and Action Plan 2025-2027

- **Priority Area 1:** Government, community and services see and value Carers, recognise their expertise and contribution, and create an environment that enables Carers to identify at the earliest opportunity.
- **Priority Area 6:** Build the evidence base about Carers to better understand who Carers are, including their diversity, what their experiences are, what works for them and why.

"There is strong alignment with Carers SA's role as a peak body and clear emphasis on lived experience, rights, and systemic change with a good balance between individual Carer outcomes and system-level reform." **Carer Voice**

Advocacy Action Plan Snapshot

Our Vision

Carers in South Australia experience better wellbeing outcomes, their rights are respected and access to support is easier, through the leadership of Carers SA as the state's peak Carer organisation, combining advocacy with practical support.

Our Values



Inclusivity



Empathy



Integrity



Professional Excellence



Collaboration

Our Advocacy Principals

Values Based	Carer Centred	Access & Equality	Empowering Self-Advocacy	Carer Literacy	Supporting Carer Advocates	Safeguarding
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Our Advocacy Priority Areas

1. Partnering with Carers	2. Raising Carer Recognition & Respect	3. Supporting Carer Wellbeing	4. Carer Informed Policy	5. Strengthening Carer Rights	6. Building Capacity of Carers, Systems & Services	7. Inclusive & Culturally Safe
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Our Action Areas

1.1 Communicating with Carers	2.1 Carer Statements	3.1 First Time Carer Resources	4.1 Carer Informed Policy	5.1 Carer Rights Statement	6.1 Carer Peer workforce Framework	7.1 Trauma Informed and intersectionality Approach
1.2 Establish a Carer Advisory Committee	2.2 National Carer Surveys	3.2 Carer friendly pathways to education	4.2 Carer Informed Submissions	5.2 Carer Rights Campaign	6.2 Service Navigation	7.2 Cultural Safety and Awareness
1.3 Establish a Carer Advice Register	2.3 Carer Recognition Act	3.3 Carer Skills and Knowledge			6.3 Collaborative Partnerships	7.3 Carer Diversity
1.4 Train and Mentor Carers as Community Advocates	2.4 Young Carer Recognition in Education	3.4 Carer Wellbeing Resources			6.4 Carer Focussed and driven research	
1.5 Partnering with Carer Guide	2.5 Carers SA Election Platform	3.5 Compassionate Communities				
1.6 Carer Initiated Escalation Pathway						

Our Advocacy Principles

Our advocacy principles are embedded throughout our advocacy action plan

Principle	How it drives our advocacy	Why it is important
Values Based	Our values of inclusivity, empathy, integrity, professional excellence, collaboration, inform how we engage with Carers in advocacy.	Our values provide a foundation with which to align our purpose and guide our decisions and inform our actions. Shared values create stronger connections with individuals, communities and organisations.
Carer Centred	We actively engage with and listen to Carers so that their needs, wants, values and perspectives of Carers direct our work. Carers are at the heart of our efforts.	Carers know best what they need and want. A Carer centred approach prioritises Carers needs and preferences. It helps us to support their goals and improves outcomes.
Access & Equity	We work to ensure and promote services that meet the needs and are accessible to Carers including services that do not create financial barriers to access.	Advocating for access and equity acknowledges and works to address systemic barriers and disadvantage, reduce isolation and marginalisation and foster inclusion. A greater understanding of the unique needs and experiences of diverse Carers is vital to eliminating inequity.
Empowering self-advocacy	Our work supports Carers to be empowered and advocate for themselves. We work with Carers to identify the services they need and want.	Self-advocacy empowers individuals to have greater control over their lives and enables them to more actively participate in decisions that affect and impact them. It assists them to build the knowledge and skills they need to better care for themselves and others.
Carer Literacy	We provide clear and purposeful information in a way that is accessible to Carers to understand their rights and supports them to navigate systems and services to meet their needs.	Carer Literacy builds the capacity of Carers to make informed decisions and problem solve. It helps them to navigate complex and often overlapping systems and services to access the services they need and want, when they need and want them, and to better support the people they care for.
Supporting Carer Advocates	We engage Carer Advocates by identifying and creating opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and experience to build their self-agency to advocate for themselves and others.	Carer Advocates represent and champion the interests of Carers and support us to influence policy and legislation that protects the rights of Carers. Ensuring they have the skills, knowledge and structure to advocate means we are better able to raise the voice of Carers.
Safeguarding	We advocate for Carers safety by identifying and responding to systemic risk, human rights issues and unmet need.	Safeguarding practices meet our legal and ethical obligations to Carers. It helps us create an environment where Carers can trust us and feel safe, supported and empowered.

"The Principles show clear alignment between values, practice and impact, with consistent emphasis on lived experience, which strengthens credibility. They reflect strong values around working alongside Carers, fairness and Carers' rights." **Carer Voice**



Our Advocacy Priority Areas

Priority Area 1: Partnering with Carers

Partnering with Carers in Advocacy underpins Carers SA's mandate as the peak body, to raise the collective voice and lived experience of Carers and to ensure its advocacy priorities and actions are evidence-based and informed by Carers. Carer lived experience relates to each Carer's personal experiences and choices, positive and negative, the knowledge they have gained and the impact on them of these experiences and choices.

Carer engagement and participation is a rights-based principle that people most impacted by a decision have the right to 'be at the table' and a partner in decision-making. It recognises that each Carer's experience of caring is unique to them and in that way, Carers are experts in lived experience and credible witnesses in identifying what services and supports will best meet their needs. Achieving purposeful advocacy requires a systemic culture of continuous improvement focused on measuring Carer outcomes and what matters to support and ensure Carers are positioned to achieve the best outcomes to improve their lives.

Meaningful advocacy recognises the importance of Carer involvement and participation in fostering active collaboration and conversation that engage the broadest diversity of Carers with the aim of meeting their diverse needs. To be truly authentic, this means engaging with the broadest number of Carers, in a range of ways that enable them to engage, considers the broadest views and experiences of Carers and to avoid tokenism.

Partnering with Carers in advocacy means

- Understanding that Carer participation and voice is valuable and necessary
- Identifying the known benefits of Carer participation and how they can achieve real outcomes

- Being honest about what can be achieved within resources, scope and limits for achievable outcomes
- Partner with Carers without assumptions, pre-agendas, bias and pre-determined outcomes
- Outline and agree on shared goals and objectives to ensure a purposeful and shared partnership
- Use Carer experience to identify actionable steps to resolve issues and achieve practical solutions
- Minimising barriers to Carer participation, particularly for groups who are hardest to reach and of the highest priority

Partnering with Carers in advocacy means acting upon the collective voices and lived experience of Carers in ways that demonstrate the positive impact of their input.



Our Advocacy Priority Areas

Priority Area 2: Raising Carer Recognition & Respect

Carers make an essential contribution to South Australian life. Every day, family members and friends provide unpaid care and support that sustains households, communities and our care systems. The amendments to the *Carers Recognition Act 2005 (SA)* in 2026 formally acknowledges this contribution and expands the *South Australian Carers Charter*, which sets out clear principles about how Carers should be treated by government and service providers. The Charter emphasises that Carers have a right to be respected, to have their health and wellbeing considered, and to be involved in decisions that affect them and the person they care for. Valuing Carers includes recognition and respect for the contribution they make to the people they support, the community, health, aged care, disability sectors and services, government and the economy.

Carer recognition means

- Seeing and valuing Carers for the vital role they play in supporting family members or friends who need care
- Acknowledging Carers as individuals and respecting their knowledge, experience, and contribution to the community
- Making the wider community aware that caring is a shared social responsibility, not a private or invisible task
- Ensuring organisations, workplaces, and government include carers in planning and decision-making that affect them

Respect is foundational to forming genuine and sustainable connections, strengthening opportunities and developing trust. Respect is closely aligned with rights-based policy, systems and services and improved outcomes. Respect helps build trust and inherent in building partnerships in decision-making and shifts power imbalances that act to gatekeep services and supports and reduce access and equity.

Carer respect means

- Actively listening to Carers concerns, issues and needs and affirming their stories and experiences
- Recognising each person's wellbeing is enhanced when they are treated with respect, dignity and equality
- Minimise the power imbalance Carers experience when seeking services and enable them to identify how best to meet their needs
- Actively facilitating and supporting opportunities for Carers choice and decision-making
- Communicating clearly and transparently with Carers and following through agreed actions to build trust and mutual respect

It is about shifting from Carers being “unseen and assumed” to being recognised, respected, and included in all aspects of society. At its heart, Carer recognition and awareness are about respect, inclusion, and understanding and ensuring Carers are visible, valued, and supported in the roles they play every day.



Our Advocacy Priority Areas

Priority Area 3: Supporting Carer Wellbeing

Carer wellbeing is determined by the Carer's own values, preferences, and life goals and emphasises the need to positively experience equity, justice, recognition, dignity, and respect. Carer wellbeing is a holistic balance between the responsibility and experience of their caring role and the impact of that role on the Carer's quality of life. Carer's physical and mental health; social and relational connectedness and inclusion; emotional resilience; economic sustainability and financial security; self-agency, autonomy and control; and their sense of purpose, opportunity and self-efficacy, beyond their caring role - all contribute, positively or negatively, to this balance. This balance is dynamic, not static; it can fluctuate over time as caregiving demands, supports, and life circumstances change.

Carers are almost half as likely to report healthy levels of wellbeing compared to adults living across Australia. They experience higher than average rates of psychological distress, poorer health, loneliness and financial distress compared to the general population. Carers find it difficult to maintain their own quality of life, physical and mental health and to manage and cope with the stressors of their caring role. Improving Carer wellbeing requires systemic responses that move beyond crisis support. Sustained investment in respite, flexible work options, peer connection, and access to counselling and education are vital. Government initiatives such as the Carer Gateway have strengthened the support landscape, but consistent, localised delivery and equitable access remain ongoing challenges.



Our Advocacy Priority Areas

Priority Area 4: Carer Informed Policy

Policy advocacy ensures that Carers lived experience influences and informs decisions that shape the systems they rely on. As South Australia's peak body, we advocate for policy grounded in Carers' voices, lived experience and in evidence. Good policy advocacy for Carers aims to ensure Carers' needs, perspectives and values are heard and understood by government and decision-makers. It exists to influence laws, funding, and services so they genuinely reflect what matters to Carers and the people they care for. Effective advocacy shapes public policy and service

design. It helps create systems that are easier to navigate, more flexible, and fairer for Carers. It also builds awareness across the community and ensures Carers are included in decisions that affect their lives. The result of strong advocacy is better recognition, rights and supports for Carers. This means policies that improve Carers' wellbeing, financial security, access to respite, employment opportunities, and participation in community life. In short, good policy advocacy turns Carers lived experience into systemic change, moving from being heard, to being included, to being supported.



Our Advocacy Priority Areas

Priority Area 5: Strengthening Carer Rights

Carer rights are the entitlements and principles that protect and support people who provide unpaid care to family members or friends. This means Carers have the right to

- Be recognised and respected for the important role they play
- Be included in decisions about the care and services provided to the person they support
- Look after their own health and wellbeing, and to have access to support, information, and respite
- Fair treatment in workplaces, education, and the community, without discrimination because of their caring role

Carer rights are also human rights because they protect the basic dignity, equality, and wellbeing of people who provide unpaid care. Therefore, these rights extend to the right to

- Be treated with respect and recognised as a person with their own needs
- The same opportunities as others to work, study, participate in community life, and make choices about their own future

- Rest and support to maintain their own physical and mental health and wellbeing
- Be heard and to take part in decisions that affect them and the people they care for

These rights align with international human rights principles outlined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which affirms equality, participation, and respect for family life. In South Australia, the *Carers Recognition Act 2005* builds on these values in the Carer Charter by requiring government and service providers to recognise, respect, and include Carers.

Beyond the Act, Carers' rights intersect with workplace legislation, income support systems and anti-discrimination protections. Ensuring these rights are understood and upheld requires coordination between agencies and consistent communication with Carers themselves. Carers must be able to assert their rights in practical ways, whether through involvement in decision-making, access to information, or support to balance work and caring responsibilities.



Our Advocacy Priority Areas

Priority Area 6: Building Capacity of Carers, Systems & Services

Capable Carers, systems and services mean building capacity and strengthening the confidence, skills and agency of Carers and improving how systems and services respond to them and meet their expressed needs. The Carers Charter highlights shared responsibility of government, service providers and communities all have a role in supporting Carers to voice their own needs and to have those needs met. We work collaboratively with other service providers within and across sectors to identify shared goals to create shared advocacy policy for impact. Collaboration shares and strengthens leadership and performance and strengthens community networks and support systems. Engaging in diverse discussion and debate, encourages a culture of shared learning and innovation.

Whilst awareness of Carers has increased, more structured training and organisational accountability are needed. Services across sectors should be equipped to identify Carers early, engage them respectfully, and tailor support that reflects individual circumstances. For Carers, capacity building also includes access to education, employment flexibility and peer networks. A well-resourced, coordinated

system that values Carers as partners ultimately benefits the people they care for and the broader community.

For Carers, capacity building means

- Having the skills, knowledge, confidence, and support to manage their caring role and their own wellbeing
- Access to information, training, peer connection, and opportunities for future planning

For systems and services, capacity building means

- Making sure organisations and workers understand Carers' needs and can respond in flexible, respectful, and inclusive ways
- Building stronger coordination between services, so Carers don't have to navigate complex systems alone
- Creating policies, funding, and leadership that sustain and improve support for Carers over time

Capacity building is about equipping both people and systems to work together more effectively, so Carers are supported, services are responsive, and care is sustainable for everyone involved.



Our Advocacy Priority Areas

Priority Area 7: Inclusive & Culturally Safe

Cultural safety and inclusion for Carers means that every Carer, regardless of their background, culture, or language, feels respected, understood, and supported in ways that are consistent with their values and beliefs and acknowledges their experiences. It means recognising and acknowledging a historical and cumulative negative lived experience of marginalisation, discrimination, stigma and racism and the impact this has on a person's self-agency and autonomy. It also means recognising how people's lives are shaped by their identities, relationships and social factor to create intersecting forms of oppression and trauma and recurring experiences of marginalisation, stigma and inequity, and acknowledging the trauma that can be experienced through the burden of caring.

Inclusive, and Culturally Safe Support means

- Actively listening to and valuing Carers' cultural identity, beliefs, family and kinship structures
- Understanding trauma, intersectionality and the intersecting realities of age, gender, disability, socioeconomic status and location
- Acknowledging Carers lived experience as their truth and an important process in informing systems, policy and practice
- Creating environments for Carers in ways to feel safe, comfortable, recognised and respected

- Using partnership and engagement strategies that recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Carers connection to Country, kinship, and community and that value and demonstrate respect for their cultural beliefs, values and relationships
- Recognising that representatives of diverse groups do not represent the views and experiences of every other person
- Working in partnership with diverse communities and groups to design and deliver services that reflect cultural knowledge and lived experience without judgment, assumption or barriers

Cultural safety and inclusion are essential to ensuring all Carers are recognised and supported equitably. The SA Carers Charter explicitly recognises the importance of respecting the cultural and linguistic diversity of Carers with specific consideration to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Carers. Culturally safe practice means more than translation; it requires understanding of culture, family, kinship and community values. Embedding cultural safety within all Carer systems services, policy and practice through partnership and co-design with community organisations, will ensure supports are respectful, relevant and trusted.

"The priority areas cover a wide range of Carer experiences and reflect the complexity of caring roles. They balance recognition, wellbeing, rights and inclusion well. It will be important that these areas are seen as connected, as many Carers experience multiple challenges at the same time." **Carer Voice**

"These priority areas reflect the real issues Carers face across recognition, wellbeing, policy influence, and rights." **Carer Voice**



Our Advocacy Action Plan

Priority Area 1:

Partnering with Carers

Outcome: Carers are heard, included and have impact: *'I have a voice and my voice makes a difference'*

	Action	What we will do
1.1	Communicating with Carers	Embed a continuous feedback loop when partnering with Carers so that Carers see their contributions reflected in actions and outcomes
1.2	Carer Advisory Committee	Convene a Carer Advisory Committee to advise on Carers SA's contribute to and advise on advocacy priorities including policy, submissions, research and strategies to improve the lives of Carers
1.3	Carer Advocate Register	Establish a Register of Carer Advocates to support the Advocacy work of Carers SA and contribute to the work of the Carer Advisory Committee and Carers SA advocacy work
1.4	Train and mentor Carers as advocates	Implement a Carer Advocacy Training program to support Carers to develop, expand and apply their advocacy knowledge and skills
1.5	Partnering with Carers Guide	Develop a Guide for Partnering with Carers to support and inform organisations, sectors and government to understand and actively partner with Carers in recognition, co-design, policy and decision-making
1.6	Carer Initiated Escalation	Work in partnership with key organisations and the South Australian health sector to implement a clear Carer initiated escalation pathway

"Training and mentoring Carers as advocates is especially important. Many Carers already have deep knowledge but lack pathways to influence systems confidently. Building skills, leadership, and paid or formalised roles for Carers will strengthen outcomes. The Partnering with Carers Guide should emphasise codesign as standard practice, not optional consultation." **Carer Voice**

"I strongly support this area. A genuine partnership with Carers is essential for effective advocacy. This gives clear feedback about how Carer input is used will help build trust and avoid people feeling consulted but not heard." **Carer Voice**

Priority Area 2:

Raising Carer Recognition & Respect

Outcome: Carers are seen, valued and respected: *I am recognised as a Carer and people understand and value the contribution I make.*

	Action	What we will do
2.1	Carer Statements	Produce a suite of Carer Statements in co-design with Carer groups including Young Carers, Multicultural Carers, First Nation Carers, Veteran Carers, LGBTQIA+ Carers, Rural and Remote Carers, Informal Kinship Carers and others
2.2	National Carer Surveys	Contribute insight and key issues important to Carers in SA to inform survey questions and facilitate National Carer Surveys in SA (National Carer Survey and the National Carer Wellbeing Survey) to ensure continued high Carer response rates in SA to ensure SA data strongly informs reporting and fundings and informs policy in SA
2.3	Carer Recognition Act	Work in partnership with the DHS to support a range of strategies, resources and materials to support compliance with the Carer Recognition Act amendments Develop information and resources for Carers and the community to understand the role and function of the Act, definition of Carer and the Carer Charter
2.4	Young Carer Recognition in Education	Carer Support Network Project SA: Develop a Young Carers in Schools Toolkit and suite of information and support resources to increase Young Carer recognition, support Young Carers participation and education and learning
2.5	Election Platform	Establish clear Carer priority strategies for Carers SA's state election cycle aligned with National Carer Strategy outcomes and issues and priorities for Carers in SA

"There needs to be a better understanding of what Carer recognition means for Carers in a practical sense and a genuine consideration of how recognition practically improves the lives of Carers - this ties in with the principles and priorities." **Carer Voice**

"Recognition and respect are vital, especially for Carers who are often overlooked in health, education and workplace systems. I particularly support increased recognition of Young Carers and clearer information about the Carer Recognition Act and Charter, as many Carers are still unaware of their rights." **Carer Voice**

Priority Area 3:

Supporting Carer Wellbeing

Outcome: Carers needs are recognised and met: *'I am asked about how I am doing and what I need.'*

	Action	What we will do
3.1	First-Time Carer Resource	Develop focused resources for Carers who are new to the caring role to support them to navigate systems, access supports and increase their capacity to support the needs of the person they care for
3.2	Carer friendly pathways to education	Work with education sectors to develop Carer Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) based on their Carer lived experience skills and knowledge to be recognised by Education providers TAFE, RTOs, Universities into higher education courses
3.3	Carer skills and knowledge	Work with education and training providers to identify microcredential pathways (short, competency-based recognition courses) that validate skills and knowledge through multiple free sources (eg Open University) to support Carers gain skills and knowledge to build employment opportunities
3.4	Carer Wellbeing Resource	Develop a Carer Wellbeing resource to support and highlight to Carers the importance of caring for their own wellbeing and mental health wellness
3.5	Compassionate Community	Carers SA to participate in Compassionate States Project (SA and Vic) Pilot Compassionate organisation (2026-2028)

"This area reflects the ongoing and changing nature of caring and its impact on wellbeing. Early support for first-time Carers and recognising Carers' skills and experience are important steps in reducing longer-term social and financial impacts. Wellbeing support needs to be accessible and timely, not just available in crisis." **Carer Voice**

"Many Carers enter the role suddenly and are overwhelmed by fragmented systems. Navigation help, financial guidance, and peer support at the start would prevent burnout. Recognition of lived experience as formal skills through RPL is also a strong and empowering strategy." **Carer Voice**

Priority Area 4:

Carer Informed Policy

Outcome: Carers shape the policies that affect them: *'My lived experience shapes policy to meets my needs'*

	Action	What we will do
4.1	Carer informed Policy	Identify areas for development of Policy Statements that support Carers SA's Advocacy priority areas and where policy can best support, promote and clarify issues and barriers for Carers
4.2	Carer informed Submissions	Maximise opportunities to identify and respond to government policy consultation relevant to Carers Engage with Carers across Carers SA's Carer links and networks to ensure Carers and the sector partners and stakeholders inform our submissions

"It would be useful that Carers had an understanding of how they can contribute as individuals in terms of submissions etc. as well as contributing thoughts and feedback to collective contributions." **Carer Voice**

"Carer-informed policy helps ensure systems work in real life, not just on paper. Using lived experience to shape policy and submissions is a real strength. Including a Carer impact lens will help identify unintended consequences early." **Carer Voice**

Priority Area 5:

Strengthening Carer Rights

Outcome: Carers have agency and advocate for their rights: *'I know my rights and I am listened to when I use them'*

Action	What we will do
5.1 Carer Rights Statement and Resource	Develop a Carers' Rights Statement in SA consistent with the SA Carer Charter and other rights-based conventions Develop Carer rights resources that promote the SA Carer Charter and other rights-based conventions and standards that • inform and support Carers to self-advocate and navigate systems and services • inform and support systems and services to embed the Carer Charter and Carers rights in practice, systems and services
5.2 Carer Rights Campaign	Carers Advisory Committee Project: Run Carer Rights Campaign in co-design with Carers promoting the rights of Carers across sectors and services and the importance and impact of Carer Advocacy

"A clear Carer Rights Statement is very important. Many Carers don't know what they are entitled to or how to advocate when systems fail them. Rights information should be practical, plain language, and widely distributed across health, education, and disability services." **Carer Voice**

"Strengthening Carer rights is essential, particularly where Carers experience power imbalances with services. Practical, easy-to-understand resources will be important, along with making sure services actively apply the Charter, not just acknowledge it." **Carer Voice**

Priority Area 6:

Building Capacity of Carers, Systems & Services

Outcome: Carers are informed and empowered: *‘I know what supports are available, how to access them and see a path forward for myself’*

	Action	What we will do
6.1	Carer Peer Workforce	Develop a framework for Carer Peer Workforce roles to increase Carer peer support in and across health, aged care, disability and education sectors
6.2	Service Navigation	Advocate for service navigation systems for Carers across Carer, aged care, disability, healthcare systems and services to support Carers to source and access the services they need and advocate for services for the people they care for
6.3	Collaborative Partnerships	Identify opportunities for collaborations in projects, programs and resources that build the capacity of the sector to support Carers Identify opportunities to collaborate with • The Carer Support Network SA (CSNSA) • State, territory and national peak bodies • Health, aged, disability sectors • Other peak bodies in SA
6.4	Carer Focused & Driven Research	Identify priority areas to drive Carer focussed and research Implement Research Policy and to actively partner with research centres and universities in Carer focussed research

“Service navigation and peer workforce development are particularly important. Carers often act as unpaid case managers. Dedicated peer roles and navigators would significantly reduce stress and improve outcomes. Research should be driven by Carers’ real-world priorities.”

Carer Voice

“For me Carer focused research is very important for future Carers and families... especially generational caring that has taken place in our family... with each generation impacted by a caring role.” **Carer Voice**

Priority Area 7:

Inclusive and Culturally Safe

Outcome: Carer advocacy drives identify-affirming outcomes: *'I have connection and belonging.'*

	Action	What will we do
7.1	Trauma-Informed and Intersectionality Approaches	Embed a trauma informed and intersectionality approach to advocacy and Carer services and support practices that actively recognises the impact of trauma and values the intersecting realities of age, gender, disability, socioeconomic status and location
7.2	Cultural safety and awareness	Build the context of cultural, social structures, individual lived experience into Carer resources, policy, recognition and rights approaches and strategies Align Carer advocacy actions with <i>Carers SA Innovate Recognition Plan</i>
7.3	Carer Diversity	Engage with Carers across diverse groups and communities to ensure the unique experiences and gaps, inequities and barriers are identified and inform advocacy across all actions Ensure the Carer Advisory Committee and Carer Advocate Register attract and reflects the diversity of Carers both in relation to their caring relationships and lived experience and Carers personal, cultural and community identity Engage with Carers SA's Carer Collective groups to support advocacy strategies and actions Work external expert organisations and groups to inform advocacy strategies and actions

"Partnerships should be trauma-informed, respectful, and flexible, recognising Carer capacity, burnout, and the emotional load that often comes with caring roles. Lived experience should be valued as expertise and appropriately recognised, including fair remuneration where Carers are contributing time and knowledge beyond their caring role. Engagement should be accessible, inclusive of diverse Carer voices, transparent about decision-making power, and accountable, with tangible outcomes communicated back to Carers to build trust and meaningful long-term collaboration." **Carer Voice**

"Trauma-informed and intersectional approaches should underpin all advocacy work. Many Carers come to the role through crisis, disability, or systemic disadvantage. Cultural safety and genuine representation in codesign must be ongoing commitments, not one-off consultations." **Carer Voice**



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