

THE VICTORIAN CHARTER SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN CARE RELATIONSHIPS - CARERS RECOGNITION ACT 2012

VICTORIAN LEGISLATION SUPPORTS CARERS, KINSHIP CARERS

The *Victorian 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 can bring.

The Victorian charter supporting people in care relationships reflects and supports the Act. The charter encourages organisations and services to better respect the important role carers have in our community.

HOW ARE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE IN CARE RELATIONSHIPS PROTECTED?

Rights are protected in several ways. The Act means state government departments, local government authorities, and organisations funded by government to provide programs and services to people in care relationships have to respect and recognize the vital role that carers play in our community.

State government departments, local government authorities 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 Act 2006 is a law about freedoms, rights and responsibilities. State government, local government and organisations funded to provide services 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.

The Act means state government departments, local government authorities, and organisations funded by government to provide programs and services to people in care relationships have to respect and recognize the vital role that carers play in our community.

WHAT DOES THE CHARTER MEAN FOR CARERS?

- 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
- 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. This includes 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.

WHAT DOES THE CHARTER MEAN FOR PEOPLE BEING CARE FOR?

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, a person with a disability, a mental illness or an ongoing medical condition.

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

People in care relationships need 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 Act and the charter 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.

CARE RELATIONSHIPS SHOULD BE RECOGNISED, RESPECTED AND SUPPORTED

Recognising, respecting and supporting carers can be achieved by:

- having community, health and other care

organisations that support the carer, the person needing care, and the care relationship. These include:

- mental health, disability services and aged care services
- funded care organisations 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 ACT AND THE CHARTER MEAN FOR ORGANISATIONS THAT PROVIDE SUPPORT?

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

- suit the cultural identity of the carer and the person being cared for
- 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 ACT AND THE CHARTER MEAN FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS?

State government and local government use the Act and charter to guide:

- carer friendly workplaces in state government departments and local government authorities
- development of policies 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, local government and relevant 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.