



**Submission to the New Government Strategy for older  
Tasmanians 2023-2029**

**May 2022**

## About Carers Tasmania

Carers Tasmania is the Peak Body representing the more than 80,000 informal carers (hereafter carers) in the state.

Carers Tasmania's vision is for an Australia that values and supports carers.

Our mission is to work to improve the health, wellbeing, resilience and financial security of carers and to ensure that caring is a shared responsibility of family, community and the government.

Our values drive everything we think, say, and do.

- **Carers first** – we listen to what carers need, commit to their desired action plan, and deliver results that matter most to carers
- **Care in all we do** – we care for our work, about each other, about Tasmania's family and friend carers, and the bigger world we all share
- **Integrity always** – we are transparent, act ethically, own when things don't go to plan and do what we say we will
- **Quality every time** – we don't accept 'good enough' because carers deserve our very best every time
- **Speed that matters** – we are agile and don't put off what can be done today.

These values represent how we engage with and serve carers, how we work with each other, and our commitment to the broader community.

Carers Tasmania encourages partnership with government and the health and community sectors to enhance service provision and improve the conditions for family carers through policy development, research, and advocacy.

Carers Tasmania has offices in Moonah, Launceston and Burnie.

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## Background

Carers Tasmania acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of the land of lutruwita/Tasmania and we pay our respects to Elders past and present. We acknowledge and support people of all genders, sexualities, cultural beliefs, and abilities and understand that carers in Tasmania, whilst sharing the common theme of caring for a family member or friend are diverse individuals with varying beliefs, experiences, and identities.

Carers Tasmania is the Peak Body representing the more than 80,000 informal carers in the state.

Carers provide unpaid care and support to someone with disability, mental ill health, a chronic or life-limiting condition, alcohol or other drug dependence or who are frail or aged. Carers are predominantly family members, but may also be friends, neighbours, or colleagues.

Informal carers are not to be confused with paid support workers who are often called 'carers', with the difference being that support workers are fully employed and remunerated with all the benefits of employment. In contrast, informal carers perform their caring duties without remuneration, other than minimal carer payments and allowances from the Australian Government. The term 'informal carers' also does not automatically include kinship or foster carers, unless they care for a child with disability, mental ill health or a condition as noted above.

In addition to representing carers through the Peak Body activities, Carers Tasmania provides support to carers living in Tasmania through its service delivery arm, Care2Serve. The Commonwealth Carer Gateway program is delivered through Care2Serve, as are other supports and services, such as the Tasmanian Government's Home and Community Care program. The Carer Gateway program provides a range of services and supports for carers which are designed to build resilience, increase wellbeing, improve quality of life, and sustain carers to effectively continue their caring roles. The available supports include the provision of information, advice and referrals, holistic identification of carer strengths and needs through a carer support planning process, professional counselling, peer support, and coaching which aims to support carers in achieving specific goals.

In addition, Care2Serve has capacity to fund certain instances of planned, practical support services such as, but not limited to, in home respite, personal care, domestic assistance, and meal preparation. Care2Serve may also fund various items such as laptops to assist carers who are studying or trying to enter the workforce. Care2Serve also coordinate the provision of emergency support during instances where a carer may be unable to provide the care that they usually do, resulting from unexpected illness or injury for the carer.

## Introduction

Carers Tasmania are pleased to contribute towards the new 'Government Strategy for Older Tasmanians 2023-2029' (*the Strategy*). This is a vital strategy as ageing is something experienced by everyone, but without clear intention and plans for action, it may not be a great experience for all. We all share different experiences of life stages due to biological, cultural, emotional, physical, financial, spiritual, social, educational, and geographical differences. Ageing should be embraced as a positive opportunity as there are many positive aspects of ageing which should be celebrated.

As we age, the world is quite rapidly changing, with constant advances in technology and other primary industries affecting the way we live our day to day lives. In the present year of 2022, it is estimated that there are 542,000 people living in Tasmania,<sup>1</sup> and 114,844 of these are aged 65 or older.<sup>2</sup>

We have provided our thoughts towards the new Strategy with a focus on carers, who play a large role in the Tasmanian community. By considering and valuing informal carers in the Tasmanian community, we are supporting an integral group of people who play a vital part in the lives of their family members or friends. Everyone deserves a good life, no matter what their age or circumstances.

## Carers in Tasmania

It is estimated that one in six people living in Tasmania are a carer and this proportion is higher than the national average. The Australian Bureau of Statistics '2018 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC)' revealed that there were 80,100 carers in Tasmania, which represents 15.5% of the Tasmanian population.<sup>3</sup> Of these carers, females accounted for 51.7% and males accounted for 47.4%. In addition, the report estimated that there were 6,200 young carers aged under 25 years in Tasmania.

Carers living in Tasmania face significant disadvantage, particularly in terms of financial resources and economic security. When compared against the rest of Australia, Tasmania has been found to have greater socio-economic disadvantage.<sup>4</sup> Services Australia reported that in Tasmania, 16,843 carers received the Carer Allowance and 9,228 received the Carer Payment for the period 1 April to 30 June

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.populationu.com/au/tasmania-population#:~:text=Tasmania%20population%20in%202022%20is,the%20smallest%20of%20Australia's%20states.>

<sup>2</sup> ABS: Quarterly Population Estimates (ERP), by State/Territory, Sex and Age. [https://explore.data.abs.gov.au/vis?tm=quarterly%20population&pg=0&df\[ds\]=ABS\\_ABS\\_TOPICS&df\[id\]=ERP\\_Q&df\[ag\]=ABS&df\[vs\]=1.0.0&hc\[Frequency\]=Quarterly&pd=2019-Q2%2C&dq=1.3.8599%2BA80%2BA75%2BA70%2BA65..Q&ly\[cl\]=TIME\\_PERIOD&ly\[rw\]=REGION](https://explore.data.abs.gov.au/vis?tm=quarterly%20population&pg=0&df[ds]=ABS_ABS_TOPICS&df[id]=ERP_Q&df[ag]=ABS&df[vs]=1.0.0&hc[Frequency]=Quarterly&pd=2019-Q2%2C&dq=1.3.8599%2BA80%2BA75%2BA70%2BA65..Q&ly[cl]=TIME_PERIOD&ly[rw]=REGION)

<sup>3</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) 44300DO006\_2018 Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Tasmania, 2018. Released at 11:30am Wednesday 5 February 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, "Census of Population and Housing: General Community Profile, Australia, 2016, Cat No 2001.0

2020.<sup>5</sup> The 2022 '*Caring Costs Us*' report,<sup>6</sup> found that on average, the superannuation balance for a carer at age 67 will be reduced by about \$17,700 for every year they are a carer and that their lifetime earnings will be reduced by approximately \$39,600 for every year they continue this role. It is important to note that this is a national report, so these numbers will differ state by state, however, it does highlight the financial loss to carers as a result of providing support to a family member or friend.

Despite taking on the responsibility of providing care for their loved ones, more than half of carers in Tasmania have a disability themselves, which in turn they may require support for. Furthermore, the rates of chronic health conditions, such as arthritis, asthma, cancer, heart, stroke, osteoporosis, and vascular disease were found to be higher in Tasmania in 2017-18 compared with the rest of the nation,<sup>7</sup> therefore increasing the likelihood that carers in Tasmania may have one or more chronic health conditions themselves. Often the health needs of carers are not considered or supported.

The '*Carers Tasmania COVID Impact Survey 2022*'<sup>8</sup> found that 59.5% of carers reported that they and those for whom they care had chosen to self-isolate despite not having COVID or being a close contact. The survey also found that there was a low prevalence of carers or the person they care for having COVID, only with 3.93% of carers reporting that they had caught COVID. Although these low rates could be due to self-imposed isolation, other consequences were faced by carers as a result such as loneliness, loss or lack of practical and or emotional support, reduced income, employment issues and difficulty accessing essential items, which can all contribute to carer burnout.

When asked to report on the main methods used for keeping up to date with information regarding COVID, we found that 43.5% of carers indicated that tv or radio was their primary method of accessing this information. This was followed by internet websites at 24.6%, and social media at 19.17%. The other methods each had responses of less than 10%, which were newspaper (5.11%), friends or family (3.19%) and service providers (3.83%). For carers aged 65 years or more, the preferred method at 54.86% of accessing information was via the news (tv or radio).

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<sup>5</sup> DSS Payment Demographic Data – (Published Quarterly). Retrieved from: <https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/dss-payment-demographic-data>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.carersaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Final-Economic-impact-income-and-retirement-Evaluate-Report-March-2022.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018). <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/higher-rates-chronic-health-conditions-tasmania>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.carerstas.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Carers-Tasmania-COVID-Impact-Survey-2022-Report.pdf>

Carers rated their experience in how well they were able to access information about COVID. 2.23% of carers reported that they had not been able to access information at all, and 15.92% said they had accessed a little. 63.69% of carers stated that they were able to access information well enough and 18.15% said that they had been able to access information really well.

## Moving from the current Strategy to the new Strategy

Carers Tasmania are supportive of the action areas identified in the Current Active Ageing Strategy '*Strong, Liveable Communities: Tasmania's Active Ageing Plan 2017-2022*'<sup>9</sup> which include:

1. Health
2. Lifelong learning
3. Participation
4. Security

These four areas are essential to enable a good life across all ages. We are hopeful that the new Strategy for Older Tasmanians continues the focus on these important topics as fundamental parts of a foundation which must be built upon. It is essential to highlight that to support people living in Tasmania to age well, a combined approach by the Tasmanian Government and the wider community is required. We all play a significant role in supporting each other to age well, no matter what our age or individual circumstances.

### Health

The current Strategy states that "*Older Tasmanians report that they value being in good health and that good physical and mental health is key to living a good life*".<sup>10</sup> In order for Tasmanians to achieve and remain in good health, adequate funding is required for essential services such as community services, health and mental health services, aged care supports, disability supports, education, transport and housing in all parts of the state.

Many carers often report frustrations around accessing appropriate support, be it appropriate cultural support, or adequately trained workers to support the needs of the people they care for, which sometimes can be quite complex. This reduces the capacity to achieve or maintain good health and quality of life for both the people being cared for and for carers.

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[https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/csr/policy/Policy\\_Work/active\\_ageing\\_plan#:~:text=Plan%202017%2D2022-,Strong%2C%20liveable%20communities%3A%20Tasmania's%20Active%20Ageing%20Plan%202017%2D2022,feel%20secure%20as%20they%20age.](https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/csr/policy/Policy_Work/active_ageing_plan#:~:text=Plan%202017%2D2022-,Strong%2C%20liveable%20communities%3A%20Tasmania's%20Active%20Ageing%20Plan%202017%2D2022,feel%20secure%20as%20they%20age.)

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0027/16938/Strong\\_Liveable\\_Communities\\_-\\_Low\\_Res.pdf](https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0027/16938/Strong_Liveable_Communities_-_Low_Res.pdf)

Carers Tasmania wrote to the Tasmanian Minister for Health in 2021 expressing concerns about inappropriate hospital discharges occurring throughout the state. Care2Serve, Carers Tasmania's service delivery arm often experiences requests for emergency respite and in home supports at the last minute or at crisis point due to poor hospital discharge planning. This is an issue which is still occurring and results in significant strain on emergency respite options and rehabilitation services as well as additional physical and emotional stress on informal carers who sometimes may be unable to provide necessary care due to their own health circumstances.

For carers in Tasmania, people who are being cared for and the wider community, ensuring adequate funding, resourcing and training is essential to enable good physical and mental health to support and sustain a good life regardless of age. It is important to highlight that carers may support people as they age, become frail or experience other health conditions, but in addition, many people either become carers or continue caring roles in the later years of their lives. They may be caring for a spouse, sibling, adult child, grandchild, friend, or neighbour.

We are hopeful that the introduction of Tasmanian Carer Recognition Legislation<sup>11</sup> may also support the health and wellbeing of people in Tasmania as they age, especially in instances where carers have valuable insights to provide about the person/s being cared for that may otherwise be ignored. Carers Tasmania have consulted with carers around the state about the '*Draft Carer Recognition Bill*' provided by the Tasmanian Government and have provided a submission based on this feedback.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to primary health care and community services, we agree that early intervention and education is also key to promoting good health. We encourage the extension of grants such as the Healthy Tasmania Grants which aim to provide people with skills and information and knowledge that may support their health and wellbeing.

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<sup>11</sup> [https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/communities-sport-recreation/information\\_and\\_resources/carer\\_policy\\_and\\_action\\_plan/carer-recognition-legislation-consultation](https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/communities-sport-recreation/information_and_resources/carer_policy_and_action_plan/carer-recognition-legislation-consultation)

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.carerstas.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Carers-Tasmania-Submission-on-the-Draft-Carer-Recognition-Act-2022\\_.pdf](https://www.carerstas.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Carers-Tasmania-Submission-on-the-Draft-Carer-Recognition-Act-2022_.pdf)



## Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is a key aspect in supporting people to age well. We do not stop learning at a certain age, and in fact the skills and knowledge that we acquire as we age is often contributed back to those around us, be it to family, friends, work colleagues, and others in the community. Learning not only provides opportunity to gain skills and knowledge, but it also creates opportunity for connection and feeling a sense of purpose and participation in the wider community.

There are many different types and styles of learning, therefore a range of learning options must be available to support both formal and informal learning. Accessible learning options need to be provided to support people in finding work no matter their age, as well as options for people who are not employed to assist them in participating in their daily life. Some learning options are required to be delivered by qualified trainers, but other types of practical learning options, such as daily living skills can be provided by people who are willing to share their time and experience with the broader community. Learning options may provide social connection, peer support and skill building, as well as the sharing of generational, cultural, and spiritual information.

Tasmania is well known for having low levels of literacy, digital literacy, and numeracy. An adult literacy survey (2011) found that nearly half of Tasmania's adult population lacked the literacy and numeracy skills they need for work and life.<sup>13</sup>

*"Literacy involves listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing, and creating texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts. Literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills needed to access, understand, analyse, and evaluate information, make meaning, express thoughts and emotions, present ideas and opinions, interact with others. It involves a continuum of learning to enable individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society."*<sup>14</sup>

As people age, there must be opportunities for learning which are accessible and relevant to their situations. For example, Carers Tasmania receive funding provided by the Tasmanian Government, which supports programs that aim to sustain or improve carer wellbeing or increase knowledge and practical skills in areas that may benefit the health and wellbeing of carers or the person they care for. Some of the activities that Carers Tasmania have been able to provide include cooking healthy but easy meals, growing fresh produce, quitting smoking, mindfulness, mental health first aid, general first aid and back care and manual handling. Without adequate

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/programme-international-assessment-adult-competencies-australia/latest-release>

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[https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/639846/Literacy\\_Advisory\\_Panel\\_Paper\\_One\\_Setting\\_the\\_Scene\\_WCAG.pdf](https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/639846/Literacy_Advisory_Panel_Paper_One_Setting_the_Scene_WCAG.pdf)

funding support for these initiatives, it would be extremely difficult to facilitate these valuable programs. These programs, whilst targeted to carers, certainly have a flow on effect to the people being cared for and the wider community. We recommend that the new Strategy for Older Tasmanians continues a focus on lifelong learning and commits to the ongoing funding and support of initiatives such as these and other such programs from the broader community as well as funding for programs aiming to increase literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy skills for people in Tasmania. In addition, we are hopeful that further resourcing is provided to organisations such as community houses which are often utilised for learning opportunities as they are well trusted and accessible.

The Tasmanian Government must provide support to assist older Tasmanians to remain or re-enter the workforce. We often hear from carers who's caring role may have ended and they have found themselves struggling to get back into the workforce. The *Your Caring Way Program*<sup>15</sup> is a vocational coaching program which aims to support carers or people who have recently been a carer back into education and training pathways to support their educational or employment goals. This program is an initiative of Carers Queensland which is run throughout Queensland, South Australia, and Tasmania. It is funded by the Department of Social Services as a pilot program. We are hopeful that programs such as this will continue to be funded and implemented in Tasmania to support carers or past carers to re-enter the workforce should they wish to.

## Participation

Everyone deserves the right to participate in the community in ways that are meaningful and fulfilling to them no matter what their age or personal circumstances are. The continuation of social participation for people as they age has been found to reduce loneliness and, in some cases, the severity and/or symptoms of numerous health concerns.<sup>16</sup>

Effective communication about events and opportunities available within the community for older Tasmanians is key to ensuring that people are informed and feel motivated to participate. It is important that opportunities to participate are shared by various methods. Appropriate sharing of relevant information is just as important. For example, in the *Carers Tasmania Covid Impact Survey*,<sup>17</sup> it was reported that for carers aged 65 years or older, the preferred method of accessing information was via the news (tv or radio).<sup>18</sup> An additional factor to consider around communication is language. Language can be both stigmatising and empowering, so it is crucial that

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<sup>15</sup> <https://yourcaringway.com.au/about/who-we-are/>

<sup>16</sup> Umberson, D., & Montez, J. K. (2010). Social relationships and health: a flashpoint for health policy. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 51 Suppl(Suppl), S54–S66. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022146510383501>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.carerstas.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Carers-Tasmania-COVID-Impact-Survey-2022-Report-.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

person centred language is used, and where possible, in easy English for advertising and important information.

To ensure that people in Tasmania can participate in the community safely, accessibility must be considered and well planned for. For some people, a key aspect of accessibility is transport. We often hear that for some older people, transport is a big challenge.

For people who cannot drive, there are a multitude of options available. Public transport is not always affordable or accessible for people for many reasons such as: location, physical, cognitive, or mental ability and cost. Options such as Community Transport are available, but despite this being a valuable state-wide service, forward bookings are generally required with a notice period which can be a difficult concept for some people, or they may have a situation occur which is unplanned.

For older people who can drive, there is some support available in the form of a Disability Parking Permit. Older people may be eligible to access this permit, but there is a medical assessment form which needs to be completed by a health professional. There may also be some confusion due to the name of this permit which results in older people who may not think of themselves as a person with disability and not apply.

To support people in Tasmania as they age, consideration and planning needs to occur to enable safe, affordable, and accessible transport options all across Tasmania.

Consideration must be taken to implement initiatives such as Dementia or age friendly communities. The World Health Organisation's *'Age Friendly Cities: A Guide'*<sup>19</sup>, is a great resource to use as a starting point and outlines eight key areas which may identify and address barriers towards participation and wellbeing of older people. Specific planning, such as LGA planning or city planning must be undertaken, with the inclusion of community consultation. For example, the *'30-Year Greater Hobart Plan'*<sup>20</sup> is currently open for consultation, seeking feedback on issues such as housing, transport, and precinct planning.

Local community groups and council programs play a significant role in supporting community participation and maintaining a safe community. Adequate funding and awareness raising of community and local council initiatives must occur.

Community visitor schemes provide significant value to older people living in Tasmania. The Lifeline Community Visitors Scheme<sup>21</sup> is funded nationally by the Department of Health, and regardless of how it is funded, it's important to consider

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<sup>19</sup> World Health Organization. (2007). Global age-friendly cities: a guide. World Health Organization. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/43755>

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.greaterhobart.tas.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/345717/30-Year\\_Greater\\_Hobart\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.greaterhobart.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/345717/30-Year_Greater_Hobart_Plan.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.lifelinetasmania.org.au/community-visitors-scheme>

the continuation of this service. This sort of initiative is incredibly valuable as it supports older Tasmanians in residential aged care homes or within their own homes by providing social connection. For these people, the community visitors may be their only or main form of social contact. The next Strategy for Older Tasmanians should specify actions towards sustaining this initiative and supporting staff and volunteers who are part of this.

Carers often struggle to participate in the community due to responsibilities in their caring roles. To ensure older people in Tasmania who are carers have the ability to participate in the community, identification and referral of carers must occur, so that carers are connected with services who may be able to assist. Many people don't realise the types of supports that may be available such as respite and social support options which may provide carers with some time for themselves and may also provide new connections for the person needing care.

Volunteering is an effective way to facilitate connection, learning, practical and emotional supports and build strong communities. In Tasmania, it is estimated that approx. 297,000 Tasmanians over the age of 15 are volunteers<sup>22</sup>. These volunteers maybe younger people supporting older Tasmanians, or they may be older Tasmanians supporting other Tasmanians. The new Strategy must outline actions specifically aimed at supporting volunteers in Tasmania.

As highlighted under the area of lifelong learning, there must be adequate training and support to assist older people in Tasmania to remain or re-enter the workforce. We encourage Tasmanian government services to model supportive and inclusive workplaces for older Tasmanians and then share their success stories with the broader community.

Co-design is critical to ensuring that the voices of people with lived experience in focus areas are considered, valued, and included, which can in turn ensure that services and supports are created in a way that is most beneficial to the people who will be using it. There are many ways that older Tasmanians can be included in co-design. We commend COTA on their consultation with older Tasmanians on this current project on the new Strategy. We are hopeful that the Tasmanian Government will extend where possible, any invitation relevant to the Tasmanian community to share their experiences and thoughts about things that affect people as they age in Tasmania.

We seek for carers to be included as representatives of The Active Ageing Government Advisory Group. Carers play a vital role in supporting people in

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[https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/csr/policy/Policy\\_Work/volunteering#:~:text=There%20are%20297%20000%20Tasmanians,cent%20of%20the%20adult%20population.](https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/csr/policy/Policy_Work/volunteering#:~:text=There%20are%20297%20000%20Tasmanians,cent%20of%20the%20adult%20population.)

Tasmania and their feedback is valuable and should be shared in a group such as this to support positive and relevant change.

The Strategy must place emphasis on celebrating and valuing the achievements of older people in Tasmania. We believe it is critical that funding and promotion of events such as Seniors Week is continued. In addition, providing encouragement to the wider community to facilitate their own events is a positive way to encourage the community to get involved in combatting ageism and celebrate ageing. A potential example could be liaising with Tasmanian schools around the possibility for students to facilitate events which celebrate ageing that in turn will create connection, share learning and educate.

## Security

*“Feeling secure at home and in the community is fundamental to active ageing. But security goes beyond the physical and also includes financial, food and housing security. Elder abuse prevention is also key.”<sup>23</sup>*

For carers, financial security is a national issue and ongoing issue. This is not only an issue for carers, but also their family members. If carers are financially disadvantaged, it is likely that the family members they are supporting are disadvantaged too. As found in the ‘*Caring costs us Report*<sup>24</sup>, carers lose a significant amount of employment and super income each year that they remain in a caring role. Whilst changes to Centrelink carer payments and super are discussed and approved at a federal level, there are strategies which can be implemented locally to support Tasmanian carers.

We are hopeful that the new Strategy for Older Tasmanians will include and build on the action 16 from the ‘*Active Ageing Plan 2017-2022*’ which aim to raise awareness of eligibility for State and National concessions and payments. For some, raising awareness is not enough and practical guidance is required. We suggest that this action specifies assisting people through the application process to access these supports. We often hear from carers that they find the process to apply for payments and concessions confusing and time consuming and many people give up due to this.

Housing is a significant issue for many people living in Tasmania. In ‘*Tasmania’s Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-2025*<sup>25</sup> there are five main pathways which have been identified cohorts of people who may be particularly vulnerable to becoming homeless or experiencing housing issues. Three of these groups may be particularly relevant to older Tasmanians, and these include:

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<sup>23</sup> [https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0027/16938/Strong\\_Liveable\\_Communities\\_-\\_Low\\_Res.pdf](https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0027/16938/Strong_Liveable_Communities_-_Low_Res.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.carersaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Final-Economic-impact-income-and-retirement-Evaluate-Report-March-2022.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0027/31698/TAH\\_Action-Plan-2019-2023.pdf](https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0027/31698/TAH_Action-Plan-2019-2023.pdf)

- household dissolution (*relationship breakdowns, family violence*);
- leaving the work force (*retirement or deteriorating health and mobility*); and
- unable to live independently (*ageing, disability or serious illness*).

We note that the responsibility of providing affordable, safe, and accessible housing for people is a shared responsibility of the Tasmanian Government, Commonwealth Government, community sector, local governments, developers and landlords or agents. We are hopeful that the new Strategy can build on considerations in the 'Affordable Housing Strategy'<sup>26</sup>, including specific actions to support people with accessible, safe, and affordable housing in Tasmania as they age.

Many carers in Tasmania report caring for an adult child or grandchild. Older carers supporting a grandchild are sometimes known as Kinship carers. Kinship care is a type of care where a child or young person lives with a relative or someone they already know, such as a grandparent. Care from someone other than a parent is a common practice across some cultures. Kinship care can be explained as selecting best non-parental care placement and achieving improved outcomes for children and young people who are unable to be cared for by their parent/s.<sup>27</sup>

Whilst both formal and informal kinship carers can experience similar challenges, there are challenges unique to informal kinship carers. The main difference between formal and informal kinship care is formal kinship care is characterised by formal court orders or arrangements, but informal kinship care is a private arrangement within the family and not governed by court orders. In these circumstances a child's parents remain the legal guardians which can often result in limitations around decision making for informal kinship carers.<sup>28</sup>

According to (ABS population data and numbers of the Advice and Referral Line contacts) it is possible that up to 1,200 informal kinship care arrangements (one or more children living with kin) are in place in the Tasmanian community. We acknowledge the recommendations outlined in the 'Informal Kinship Care Summary'<sup>29</sup> and are hopeful that the New Strategy for Older Tasmanians will specify actions that also support this.

In addition to support for older Kinship carers, we are hopeful that the plan will include actions to support people of any age caring for older people. The provision of adequate support for family members or friends caring for older people is a way to ensure that older Tasmanians feel safe and secure. Routine identification and referral of carers for support is key to making this work because connection with appropriate and adequate support assists people to maintain independence as they

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<sup>26</sup> [https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0014/30254/AHS\\_Strategy\\_Final.pdf](https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/30254/AHS_Strategy_Final.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0023/146615/Informal-Kinship-Care-Summary-Review-Report-web.pdf](https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/146615/Informal-Kinship-Care-Summary-Review-Report-web.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

age. Given that approximately 93% of Tasmanians aged 65 years or older live at home, it is crucial that they and the people (if any) who help care for and support them are connected with adequate support.

We also support continuation of the implementation of the '*Protecting Older Tasmania's from Abuse: Tasmania's Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy 2019-2022*'<sup>30</sup> as well as broad community education around the strategy. The community must be educated about what elder abuse is, how to recognise signs of possible abuse and what to do if you witness or are aware of elder abuse. This is acutely important in supporting the safety and wellbeing of older Tasmanians. This education needs to be delivered as broadly as possible without the assumption that people are already aware of the topic.

The promotion and facilitation of education and training in person-centered care is critical in supporting people to maintain independence as they age. Adopting person-centered care practices is fundamental to ensuring that people receive safe and high-quality care. Simply put, person-centered care involves being respectful of, and responsive to, the preferences, needs and values of the individuals.<sup>31</sup> Whilst there is little control over staff training delivered by private care provider organisations in Tasmania due to funding or other reasons, we believe that education is key to changing the attitudes and working behaviours of staff on the front line. Consideration and care must be taken to ensure that as well as meeting physical and emotional needs, individual identities such as sexual, cultural and spiritual differences are respected and supported where possible.

Carers Tasmania often hear from carers who are unable to access the supports that they need, to the level that they require for either themselves or the person for whom they care. The reasons for this are varied and include factors such as inadequate staffing across a range of service types, gaps in the workforce skills and knowledge, lack of trauma-informed care, lack of culturally appropriate care and long wait times, and in some instances, the cost of support.

Many carers also report significant difficulty in understanding the information about services available and understanding and connecting with supports. It can take numerous phone calls, emails or visits to organisations before services are organised. Care2Serve often refer carers to the *COTA Aged Care Navigator Program*.<sup>32</sup> For people who are caring for someone, or unwell or stressed themselves, it can be extremely difficult to understand and navigate services and information. The Aged Care Navigator Program provides a beneficial and much

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<sup>30</sup> [https://equalopportunity.tas.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/534585/Respect-and-Protect-Older-Tasmanians-Tasmanias-Elder-Abuse-Prevention-Strategy-20192022-Accessible-3.pdf](https://equalopportunity.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/534585/Respect-and-Protect-Older-Tasmanians-Tasmanias-Elder-Abuse-Prevention-Strategy-20192022-Accessible-3.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/partnering-consumers/person-centred-care#:~:text=Person%2Dcentred%20care%20is%20widely,value%20of%20the%20individual%20patient.>

<sup>32</sup> [https://www.cotatas.org.au/programs/aged\\_care\\_support/acsn\\_trial/](https://www.cotatas.org.au/programs/aged_care_support/acsn_trial/)

needed service in the community for ageing Tasmanians who need support. We are hopeful that this valuable program will remain funded to provide this support, especially with the proposed changes which are anticipated to occur as part of the new Support at Home Program.<sup>33</sup> We highlight that the Aged Care Navigator program initially began as a trial in 2019 which has been extended until December 2022.

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2022/01/support-at-home-program-overview.pdf>