



Statement for Young Carers

The Carers Association of SA is committed to identifying, supporting, and enhancing the lives of young Carers and their families, while continuing to develop awareness within agencies of the issues faced by these young people providing a caring role.

Vision

The vision of the Carers Association of SA for young Carers is that the caring role of children and young people will be accepted and supported by governments, service providers and the community; that young Carers will be recognised for the contributions that they make within society; that young Carers will be provided with the support to enable them to participate in this role with pride, dignity and security and that services will be provided through a family approach that recognises the young Carers' contribution to the wellbeing of their families.

Rights

The Carers Association SA believes that children have the right to participate in education, enabling them to reach their full potential. They also have the right to rest and to be involved in recreation and play.

Young Carers have the right:

- To have their needs acknowledged and met by having someone to listen to them.
- To access information on medical conditions, and services such as welfare rights, benefits, respite and other help and support available to them.
- To be provided with the practical assistance needed to cope with their caring role.
- To a safe and protective environment.

The Carers Association acknowledges the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which emphasises the importance of involving children and young people in decisions affecting their lives.

Recognition

The Carers Association of SA recognises a young Carer as someone under the age of 25 years who provides significant care and support to a family member within the home who is suffering from chronic physical or mental illness, disability, or who is frail aged, where this care would normally have been provided by an adult in the

family. Significant numbers of these young people are children under the age of 18 years.

- We acknowledge that there are considerable numbers of children and young people providing practical and emotional support to family members within the home, many of whom remain unidentified.
- We accept that the support given by the young Carer would in normal circumstances be provided by the adult within the home, yet these young people are not given the equivalent support.
- We realise that the extent of care provided by young Carers is not given the recognition and support it deserves by governments and outside agencies.
- We accept that young Carers and their families generally acknowledge the caring role as positive and fulfilling but that inadequate support for the caring role can result in negative impacts on the young Carers.
- We believe that young Carers have the same rights as other children and should have the opportunity to experience social and educational life in the same way.
- We believe that young Carers have the right to feel safe and protected.
- We accept that young people who provide a caring role may want to continue this responsibility, and that in doing so they need to receive recognition for their contributions to society.
- We recognise the need to provide support to the family as a whole unit when developing policies for young Carers.

Services

Young Carers is one of the major policy priorities of the Carers Association of SA. There are an estimated 29,200 young Carers across South Australia, including 13,300 children under the age of 18 (ABS 1998). We aim to provide services which address the ideals that:

- Promote an understanding of the issues that affect children and young people providing a caring role.
- Encourage respect for individuals who have caring responsibilities within the family.
- Equip children and young people with the tools to enable them to deal with their caring role.
- Provide opportunities for young Carers to identify and recognise their own abilities and skills.
- Involve children and young people in the decision making processes when they involve their own lives, ensuring that their needs as an individual as well as the needs of the 'cared for' are taken into account.
- Take into account the diversity of cultural, racial and religious differences when providing support for young Carers.
- Provide a supportive and encouraging environment in which young Carers feel safe and protected.

The Family

Young Carers are first and foremost members of a family. The Carers Association recognises:

- Parents' responsibility for children and young people in the family and the need for families to receive adequate services and support to the family to lessen the burden of responsibility on children and young people who care.
- Parents' responsibilities for the whole family.
- The rights of parents to be involved in the decision-making and communication that affects the family.
- That there may be a conflict between parental rights and responsibilities and young Carers' rights and responsibilities.
- That whilst the parent may need the support and care provided by the young Carers they also wish to support their child in having the opportunity to develop.