

10 July 2015

Department of Social Services  
Disability Employment Taskforce  
[disabilityemploymenttaskforce@dss.gov.au](mailto:disabilityemploymenttaskforce@dss.gov.au)

**Re: National Disability Employment Framework issues paper**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Carers NSW welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the National Disability Employment Framework issues paper. Our submission provides some general comments about the needs of family carers who support people with disability.

Carers NSW is an organisation for people who provide informal care and support to a family member or friend who has a disability, mental illness, drug or alcohol dependency, chronic condition, terminal illness, or who is frail. Carers NSW supports and advocates for carers in NSW, and is the only state-wide organisation that has all carers as its primary focus. Carers NSW is also part of the national Network of Carers Associations, which works collaboratively to lead change and action for carers.

Carers NSW also plans to participate in subsequent stages of the consultation process on the development of the National Disability Employment Framework by the Department of Social Services and looks forward to Round 2 in August/September 2015.

Thank you for accepting our submission. For further information, please contact Yve Gritschneider, Policy and Development Officer, on (02) 9290 4744 or email [yveg@carersnsw.org.au](mailto:yveg@carersnsw.org.au).

Yours sincerely,



Elena Katrakis  
CEO  
Carers NSW

## **Carers NSW submission to the National Disability Employment Framework issues paper**

### **Carer recognition in policies aimed at improving the lives of people with disabilities**

According to the 2012 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC), most people with a reported disability New South Wales (NSW) needed assistance with at least one activity. In 81 per cent of cases some informal assistance was provided by family members or friends (carers). People with a profound or severe core activity limitation were particularly likely to receive informal assistance, especially with mobility, domestic tasks, transport, self-care and health care. In addition to helping people with disability with daily activities, many of the 857,200 carers in NSW play a critical role in supporting and advocating for the rights and recognition of those they care for.<sup>1</sup>

The extensive support that carers provide to people with disability, and the greater likelihood that they will have a disability themselves, means that policies affecting people with disability also affect carers. Policies aimed at improving the lives of people with disability therefore need to seriously consider the needs and experiences of carers alongside those of people with disability.

### **Carers of people with disability who are in employment**

Caring is associated with working fewer hours, having a more marginal attachment to the labour force, and working at a level below the carer's skills and qualifications.<sup>2</sup> For those carers who do remain in the workforce, balancing work and care can be a source of considerable stress. The *Australian Unity Wellbeing Index Survey* found that over one third of employed carers were concerned about losing their job because of their caring responsibilities.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, Carers NSW strongly recommends that the National Disability Employment Framework consider the broader benefits and flow on effects of disability employment for family carers of people with disability. Many carers report that employment for the person with disability they care for provides them with a much needed break and an opportunity to do other important tasks. This can reduce their domestic workload, reduce stress and enable them to fit in some time for themselves. In some cases it even frees up carers to return to work or increase their own engagement with employment or education.

### **Diversity of people with disability**

Carers NSW agrees that employment services need different approaches to assist different groups of people with disability, however we believe that the list (page 16) of groups of people who do poorly in terms of employment outcomes omits an important group which is 'people with disabilities who are also carers'. The rate of disability among carers is much higher than for non-carers, with around one third of carers in NSW reporting a disability themselves, compared to 16% of the non-carer population.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014), *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: New South Wales, 2012*. Catalogue no. 4430.

<sup>2</sup> Taskforce on Care Costs (2007), *The hidden face of care: Combining work and care responsibilities for the aged and people with a disability*, Sydney.

<sup>3</sup> Cummins, R, Hughes, J et al (2007), *The wellbeing of Australians – Carer Health and Wellbeing, Australian Unity Wellbeing Index Survey 17.1 Special Report*, Melbourne.

<sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014).