

REPORT SNAPSHOT

Implementation of the *Carers Recognition Act* 2021

Why did we do this audit?

- A carer is a person who provides unpaid care and support to another person who: has a disability, mental disorder or mental illness or ongoing medical condition; is aged and frail; and/or is a child or young person in kinship or foster care.
- Carers are not always recognised by service systems and employers, and they may struggle to be meaningfully included in decisions made about the people they are caring for. Many carers in the ACT have previously reported high levels of psychological distress.
- The *Carers Recognition Act 2021* (ACT) establishes a set of principles regarding the treatment of carers that public sector agencies and funded support agencies are obliged to uphold.
- The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of ACT Government agencies' implementation of the Act.



What did we find?

- The Health and Community Services Directorate (HCSD) (as the administering directorate for the Act) did not develop an implementation plan or provide effective education or training to support ACT Government agencies and community stakeholders.
- HCSD placed the onus on agencies to identify whether and how the requirements in the Act applied. This has led to variability and inconsistency in approach across ACT Government agencies.



What are the key issues?

- HCSD has not effectively planned for, supported and managed implementation of the Act. This increases the risk that carers are not recognised or supported as intended and agencies are at risk of failing to meet their obligations under the Act.



What did we recommend?

- HCSD should provide clearer support for agencies and improve its engagement with community stakeholders and funded agencies.
- The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate should revise the annual report directions to improve whole-of-government reporting on the implementation of the Act.

