

## Young Carers

Young people often find themselves taking on the role of a carer, using their skills and resilience to do so. A 2009 research paper suggested that 12.7% of males aged 24 and under and 12.6% of females the same age, take on the role of a carer in Australia and it is estimated that there are 380,000 young carers in Australia, with 170,600 younger than 18 years. The contribution that young carers make to the community should be acknowledged and applauded as many sacrifice things for themselves in order to care for another. Young people can be carers in many different ways and may assist with personal care, finances, household tasks, taking care of siblings and providing emotional support. Given the diverse role of young carers, many go unnoticed. As a result, numbers of young carers are often underestimated with many not identifying themselves as a carer and therefore they do not access available services. Sadly, many young carers experience social exclusion at some point in their lives due to their unavailability or inability to participate in recreational activities, being unavailable for work or not attending school due to the responsibilities they have as a carer.

Young carers are entitled to additional support that enables them to continue in their caring role. For many young people caring for someone is not a choice they make, they may be the only available person able to take on the carer role. Many young carers find their caring role to be rewarding and enjoyable and use the skills and experiences they acquire as a carer to their advantage, this is particularly the case if they are supported in their role. Support is crucial for young carers as they may experience a number of disadvantages; including physical and emotional exhaustion, stress, isolation, discontinued education and limited or no opportunity to engage in paid employment.

### *YNOT is committed to:*

- Ensuring young carers get the recognition they deserve for the contribution they make through their role as a carer via increased awareness and promotion of the role young carers fulfill within the community.



- Advocating for support services, including respite services, for young carers and ensuring these services are promoted in a way that connects with young carers.
- Supporting options available for flexible learning within schools and tertiary institutions to enable young carers to successfully continue pursuing their education.
- Advocating for services and programs to cater for the needs of young carers, including affordable and reliable transport, income support and access to age appropriate and up to date information.
- Ensuring young people are involved in policy making and decisions that affect them as a young person, the person they are caring for and them as a young carer.

### *Future Vision*

A Tasmania where young carers are recognised and supported for their contributions, through services that encompass the specific needs of young carers and assist young people in meeting their own needs, as well as their needs as a carer.

### *References*

Department of Premier and Cabinet (2008), *Ensuring the best possible start to life*, retrieved from [http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/cdd/policy/agenda\\_for\\_children\\_and\\_young\\_people/11](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/cdd/policy/agenda_for_children_and_young_people/11).

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