Authorial Note

Teresa Pilbeam is an unpaid family Carer and writes this submission from this perspective. Teresa holds formal qualifications in educational and disability sectors coupled with over two decades of workplace experience. Teresa is currently a Board Director for Carers Queensland, Carers Australia and is a Carer representative member of the Queensland Carers Advisory Council. Additional to Teresa’s authorial framework is her experience as a member of Defence Force families. Teresa was born in Minden Barracks, Penang, Malaysia and grew up in a supportive Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) environment. Teresa’s father is retired RAAF and her brothers are current RAAF employees, one of whom at time of publication is serving in the Middle East support mission. Teresa possesses a high opinion of the necessity of Defence in and of Australia.

The author under the endorsement of Carers Australia gives consent for the publication and distribution of this submission to the Department of Defence.
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1 Executive Summary

This paper is presented in response to a request by Australian Department of Defence for submission to its 2015 Defence White Paper and intends to address Carer recognition issues associated with Defence Force Culture, Personnel and Capability. This analysis applies the Carer Recognition Act 2010 (Commonwealth of Australia), and its interpretation through the Public Service Act 1999 (Commonwealth of Australia), to current policies, processes and programs within the Department of Defence.

The Carer Recognition Act 2010 (Commonwealth of Australia) is enacted primarily to recognise Australia’s Carers. A Carer, by definition of the Act, is “an individual who provides personal care, support and assistance to another individual who needs it because that other individual: has a disability; or has a medical condition; or has a mental illness; or is frail and aged” (Carer Recognition Act, 2010, Part 1 s5(1)), and that person provides care in an unpaid capacity. The notion is that, explicit recognition of Carers should permeate policies associated with Diversity and Inclusion, Recruitment and Retention, and contribute to program development which assists in Strengthening Families of Australian Department of Defence personnel.

Figure 1. An overview of policy, process and program development to include provisions for Defence Carers.
The Carers’ role reaches beyond the scope of typical perceptions of caring. Responsibility of a Carer is complex, often unanticipated and sustained. Nevertheless, National Carer statistics indicate that 1 in 8 Australian citizens will be a Carer (Carers Australia) in their lifetime. Noting current Department of Defence workforce as at 31st December 2012 consists of 79292 members (Department of Defence, Defence People Group, 2014, p. 8), means potentially and conservatively, according to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2012) figures, 10% or 7929 members of Department of Defence workforce will be Carers at some point.

Department of Defence is a lead organisation charged with the ultimate care of the nation and the one brought into effect at times of civilian crisis when care is most in need, as such Defence are in a unique position as an employer to be cognisant of the reciprocal needs of Carers as stipulated in the Carer Recognition Act 2010. The proposition in this submission is that Carers be explicitly considered as a part of current Department of Defence strategy reforms that dictate in order to demonstrate maximum capability, one of its greatest challenges is to deliver a sustainable workforce. At present, due to limitations in empirical evidence regarding the instance of Carers in Defence in Australia, reviewing and reflecting on recognition and provisions for Carers is, as an initial phase, necessary and important to contributing to change strategies in Defence Force culture, personnel and
capability. A subsequent outcome of scrutiny of the Carer role in Defence policy is to offer amendments and considerations which reflect the its commitment to creation of a contemporary cultural paradigm to accommodate diverse and inclusive needs of its personnel and their families to include Carer recognition as a tangible and measurable objective.

This submission to the 2015 Defence White Paper is to enable overarching objectives of Defence strategic reform to reflect inclusion of Carers. The Strategic Reform Program 2009 – Delivering Force 2030 (Department of Defence, 2009) and 2012-17 The Defence Corporate Plan (Department of Defence, 2012) are substantially underpinned with goals detailed in Defence Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2012-2017 (Department of Defence, Defence People Group, 2014) and Pathway to Change: Evolving Defence Culture (Department of Defence, The Defence Committee, 2012). These key documents targeting strategic reform do not explicitly recognise Carers as potential members of the defence workforce, or provision for the work/life balance needs explicitly associated with Carer roles.

Department of Defence, as any other public service agency, is obliged to consider principles of The Statement for Australia’s Carers (Carer Recognition Act 2010, Schedule 1) as a part of its progress toward strategic reforms, particularly in relation to Defence Force Culture, Personnel and maintenance of workforce Capability. Consequently, this review of Carers and Defence encompasses a reflection of policies, processes and programs as perceived through the Carer Recognition Act 2010 (Commonwealth of Australia), and offers broad recommendations as a step-off point to determining the instance and needs of Carers and Defence across programs toward reform.
2  Carer Recognition Act 2010

The *Carer Recognition Act 2010* (the Act) is enacted primarily to recognise Australia’s Carers.

A Carer, by definition of the Act, is “an individual who provides personal care, support and assistance to another individual who needs it because that other individual: has a disability; or has a medical condition; or has a mental illness; or is frail and aged” (*Carer Recognition Act, 2010, Part 1 s5(1)).

The Act defines that “an individual is not a Carer in respect of care, support and assistance he or she provides: under a contract of service, or a contract for the provision of services; in the course of doing voluntary work for a charitable, welfare of community organisation; or as part of the requirements of a course of education or training” (*Carer Recognition Act, 2010, Part 1 s5(2)).

While the Act does not create legally enforceable obligations, the essence of the *Carer Recognition Act* at Part 4 s10(1)(2)(3) encourages acknowledgement of the sustained nature of the Carer role and its impact upon equitable treatment in both workplace and community. *The Statement for Australia’s Carers* (*Carer Recognition Act 2010, Schedule 1*) detailed as an Appendix contains ten principles for consideration and application to Department of Defence policies, processes and programs.

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Public service agencies and associated providers are obligated to take all practicable measures to ensure its employees and agents have an awareness and understanding of the Act by virtue of Schedule 1, *The Statement for Australia’s Carers* (Appendix).

An objective of the Act (Part 3 s7(1)(2), s9(a)(b)) is that “internal human resources policies, so far as they may significantly affect an employee’s caring role, are to be developed” and implemented to reflect the principles of the *Statement* in providing or evaluating care supports.

### 2.1 Public Service Policy Provisions

Public Service Policy provisions acknowledge that while the *Carer Recognition Act 2010* has no legal imperatives, employers should be aware of other legislation such as the *Public Service Act 1999* may create rights or obligations for Carers.

The *Fair Work Act 2009* (Commonwealth of Australia) creates entitlements and rights for Carers and impacts on provision of flexible work arrangements. In addition, while anti-discrimination legislation does not apply to Carers there is potential, depending on the nature of an employee’s complaint, they could have a claim using another strand of discrimination legislation (Baker, 2014). In conjunction with associated legal requirements is a matter of good practice. Policy should reflect fairness based on a responsibility to equitable practice and creation of a diverse workforce.

All Australian Public Service agencies are obligated under the *Fair Work Act 2009* to demonstrate practical measures to ensure employees and agents have an awareness and understanding of *The Statement for Australia’s Carers*, and are able to demonstrate evidence of reflecting this in human resource policies (*Carer Recognition Act 2010* Part 3 s7(1)(2)).

processes and programs and should be referred to as a matter of strategic reform when considering how a Carer role impacts employment.

2.2 Defence Policy Provisions

As a result of recent analyses and subsequent planning for reform across Defence agencies there is significant progression toward a workforce cultural paradigm shift reflected in strategies arising from the Defence White Paper 2000 (Department of Defence, 2000) and the 2012-2017 Defence Corporate Plan (Department of Defence, 2012). Recognising and acting upon the need for cultural change is targeted through the development of Defence Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2012-2015 (Department of Defence, Defence People Group, 2014) which lay at the heart of anticipated workforce reform. Additionally, an inclusive strategy highlights importance of diverse human elements to achieve current and anticipated personnel capability needs.

Within Pathway to Change 2012 Defence states there is a “need to be absolutely unambiguous: inclusivity and diversity are crucial to Defence’s ability to operate at peak performance and demonstrate maximum capability” (Department of Defence, The Defence Committee, 2012, p. 4). Consideration of diversity and inclusion directly impact human resource capabilities in Defence and support the intention of delivering a sustainable workforce. Currently Defence have limited human resource policy explicitly detailing recognition for Carer responsibilities.

Although the Defence Enterprise Collective Agreement (DECA) 2012-2014 (Department of Defence, 2013, pp. 137-8) details flexible workplace arrangements and provision leave entitlements, to assure employees that “Defence is committed to helping its employees to manage the impact of work on
Defence strategy acknowledges that in order to be competitive in the current job market, “attracting and retaining the future workforce will be one of the most significant challenges ahead” (Department of Defence, Defence People Group, 2014, p. 5). To harness the potential of a broader section of Australian community, Defence must comprehensively employ a diverse and inclusive strategy in order to build a sustainable workforce which reflects contemporary views associated with equity, and this should include Carers. If the intent of the Carer Recognition Act 2010 has been overlooked within the Defence Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2012-2017, then a policy priority within Performance Indicators (Department of Defence, Defence People Group, 2014, p. 30) should be extended to explicitly include Carers.

In accordance with the Public Service Act 1999, government agencies are obligated to explicitly demonstrate practical measures and evidence of reflecting an understanding and awareness of the Statement for Australia’s Carers (Carer Recognition Act 2010, Schedule 1, p. 9) across human resource policies. For example, on 6 June 2013 Defence launched the Care Aware program in conjunction with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, which aims to raise awareness, recognition, support and appreciation of Australians who provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends. Instigating programs toward Carer recognition is applauded, and could additionally provide a platform from which to gather empirical evidence of the nature of Carers in Defence.

Department of Defence policy should reflect explicit provision for Carers in strategic goal acquisition to ensure compliance with the Carer Recognition Act 2010 stipulated in Public Service Act 1999 for agencies of government. Defence, as an agent of government, is not exempt from implementing unambiguous policy targeting the recognition and provision for Carers in their workforce.

Teresa Pilbeam endorsed by Carers Australia | Submission to the 2015 Defence White Paper
3 Strategic Reform Processes and Programs that Impact Carers

A proposition, where Carers should be acknowledged within Department of Defence strategic reform programs, is of significant importance in establishing Defence as a contemporary business which practices human resources management in an equitable and humanistic manner worthy of earning admiration as a preferred employer in Australia.

Including an acknowledgment of Carers in the Strategic Reform Program 2009 – Delivering Force 2030 (Department of Defence, 2009, p. 5) can be embedded within three key elements which address:

1. *Improved Accountability* – greater *transparency* fits a need for compliance with legislative obligations under the *Carer Recognition Act 2010* and the *Public Service Act 1999*.

2. *Improved Planning* – particularly in relation to Carer inclusion in Defence workforces, and recognition of skills and experience which potentially enhance *capability* and assist in planning for *preparedness*.

3. *Enhanced Productivity* – Carers in Defence drive a need for flexible work opportunities and contribute to *effective business practices*.

Of particular scrutiny is a need for cultural change across processes and programs in Defence to develop positive humanistic community perceptions. An application of Carer provisions across 15
separate reform streams detailed in the *Strategic Reform Program 2009 – Delivering Force 2030* (Department of Defence, 2009, p. 5) has potential to act as agents of change for Defence. A review across policy regarding Carers and Defence pertaining to diversity and inclusion, recruitment and workforce retention and strengthening families is necessary within its framework of strategic reform.

### 3.1 Diversity and Inclusion

Department of Defence policy reforms have prioritised diversity in employment to include women; indigenous Australians; people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; people with disability; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons; mature age and intergenerational workforce; and youth (Department of Defence, Defence People Group, 2014, p. 5). Unfortunately, *Defence Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2012-2017* (Department of Defence, Defence People Group, 2014) does not acknowledge the role of the Carer, or the impact a Carer role may have on sustainable employability and work/life balances.

*Figure 2. Anyone can be a Carer any time.*
Challenging traditional models of recruitment, progression, development and retention in Defence enables a notion that Carers should be at least acknowledged in workforce planning. Development of explicit policy to accommodate Carers within defined target groups is easily embedded into an already considered and comprehensive strategy of diversity and inclusion.

Defined processes for Carer recognition, review, reflection and provision in Defence policy should be a priority because anyone could be a Carer at any time; and that care role should not exclude an Australian from participating in the workforce (Carer Recognition Act, 2010, Schedule 1, Principles (6)(7)(9)(10)). Part of developing key diversity themes (Department of Defence, 2014, p. 8) is a need for data gathering to determine statistical representation of Carers in Department of Defence workplaces. Ideally Defence should be able to select from the entirety of a pool of work-ready Australian citizens in order to “build expert capabilities” (Department of Defence, 2009, p. 5). If it is concluded that Carers have potential skill to contribute to the fulfilment of defence workforce needs, then drafting specific policy to recruit and retain Carers as diverse members is relevant.
If Defence intend to capture job family data and implement a new approach to career and talent management, as detailed in Defence Output Supported: Priority 8 of the 2012-17 Defence Corporate Plan (Department of Defence, 2012, p. 38) in developing a positive and inclusive work environment; then policy acknowledgment of Carers needs should evolve as a natural extension to sustaining a “unified workforce which is diverse, equitable, safe and responsive” (Department of Defence, 2012, p. 38).

3.2 Recruitment and Workforce Retention

Absence of explicit Carer recognition in corporate Defence policy potentially impacts on recruitment and workforce retention. In an equitable employment environment Carers should not be excluded from a workforce due to a lack of acknowledgment of the complex nature of their caring role.

According to statistical data as at 31st December 2012, Defence have a current workforce of 79 292 that consists of 56 955 serving Australian Defence Force members, 22 337 Australian Public Service employees, and 25 329 active Reserve members (Department of Defence, Defence People Group, 2014, p. 8). If 1 in 8 Australians are likely to be a Carer during their lifetime and it is assumed conservatively that 10% (ABS, 2012) or 7 929 members of the Defence workforce will be obliged to
be a Carer, then incorporating Carer recognition policy within recruitment and workforce retention processes should be a priority to assist Defence in achieving critical capability issues.

If Defence anticipate an increase of 3000 military and 300 civilian jobs (Department of Defence, 2009, p. 21) to its workforce over the next ten years, the risk is that if Carers are not recognised within recruitment and retention strategic planning, then Defence are effectively reducing the pool of talent from which to build skills, numbers and commitment to a resource-conscious culture (Department of Defence, 2012, p. 16). Economically, provisions which assist Department of Defence personnel who are Carers to remain in the workforce must surely outweigh costs associated with recruitment, training and loss of experience.

In an Australian military context, encouraging amendments to Department of Defence policy to include acknowledgment of the Carer Recognition Act 2010 brings forth some divergence associated with personnel readiness and perceptions of the Australian public. Members of Defence have historically been perceived as requiring one hundred percent readiness as a part of fulfilling their role as a capable military force. Responsibilities of a primary Carer inherently inhibits fulfilment of a notion that all individuals in the Department of Defence workforce are available each day of the year, around the clock, to respond to issues of National security or disaster.

Changing perceptions of Defence personnel need to include targeted groups, and this initiative is highlighted within a five year agenda of the 2012-2017 Defence Corporate Plan where there is evidence of planning “for innovative ways to sustain the competitiveness of its employment” (Department of Defence, 2012, p. 36). Just as Reserves form a part-time cohort, so too should opportunities for transitionary processes be available for current full-time workers in Defence who by definition of the Act are, or become Carers (Department of Defence, 2009, p. 23). To achieve these measures Defence should underpin its corporate plan with implementation of important reforms which recognise and accommodate Carers in their workforce.
Items within the *Strategic Reform Program 2009 – Delivering Force 2030* which address Workforce Impact and Reserves, indicate the changing nature of employment opportunities in and around Defence which “can no longer rely on a workforce drawn from a narrow pool of talent” (Department of Defence, Defence People Group, 2014, p. 6). Maximising Defence Force capability through streamlining the business model, intended to provide an ongoing human resource improvement dividend, is reliant on indicative military and civilian workforce blends (Department of Defence, 2009, p.21) as a part of cost saving initiatives, and should include a statement about inclusivity of Carers as a targeted group.

For instance, a business model segment of the *2012-2017 Defence Corporate Plan* (Department of Defence, 2012, p. 36) detailing human resources, youth development and engagement strategies intends to refine Defence Force Recruiting (DFR) marketing, advertising and sourcing strategies which could consider providing bursaries for Young Carers to enter Cadets, or implementing initiatives for Carers to recruit as Reserves.

The *Strategic Reform Program 2009 – Delivering Force 2030* (Department of Defence, 2009, p. 11) in developing a better understanding of cost drivers associated with different levels of preparedness has not yet considered a Carer cohort as having potential impact on reduced workforce numbers. Eliminating duplication and waste in maintaining human resource capabilities, through consideration of Carers in Defence, assists in building a picture of long-term costs associated with the rise of a culture of resource efficiency and continuous improvement in its workforce.

If Carers are not recognised as a targeted cohort in Defence, then workforce retention goals are potentially impacted by personnel loss due to Carer obligations. Policies of differentiated employment which assist Carers in Department of Defence workforces to manage external and internal pressures guarantees a greater possibility of retaining valued people in areas where their critical skills are essential in delivering capability (Department of Defence, 2012, p. 37).
3.3 Strengthening Families

Department of Defence is in a unique position as an employer with a segment of its workforce potentially mandated to give their lives for their country, be permanently disabled, or subjected to mental health concerns. For every person with disability, mental health or frail and aged concerns there is an unpaid Carer. Whilst Defence reforms are expertly provisioning for disability and mental health issues amongst its workforce, often Carers remain concealed or transparent.

Defence are clearly considering the needs of its personnel through its 2012-2017 Defence Corporate Plan, where mandates to effectively deliver rehabilitation and medical, redeployment and redundancy packages (Department of Defence, 2012, p. 36) are detailed. Development of its Support for Wounded, Injured or Ill Program (SWIIP) (Department of Defence, Joint Health Command, 2010) objective is to provide community grants to assist with implementation of programs to support
returning personnel and their families (Department of Defence, 2012, p. 21). Families of Defence personnel are no longer considered an adjunct to the military. Family friendly policies (Department of Defence, 2009, p. 23) are being integrated within human resource considerations and provisions for Carers should be specifically designated.

The “Defence Family Matters” (Department of Defence, Defence Community Organisation, 2000) publications are exceptional in highlighting Carer roles and add value to a notion that for every wounded, injured or ill member of Defence there is a Carer supporting them. Carers in Defence families who are in need are able to access organisations such as Carers Australia (2014. www.carersaustralia.com.au) for additional support and recognition at little to no cost. Collaborations with care organisations and the disability sector through Defence Special Needs Support Group (Department of Defence, Defence Community Organisation, 2000, www.defence.gov.au/dco) contribute to strengthening families of Defence personnel, and these types of initiatives by the Department of Defence should continue to be funded as a subsidiary of its 2011 Australian Defence Force Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (Department of Defence, Joint Health Command, 2011).

While there are no obligations for Department of Defence to consider Carers within the families of personnel, Workforce Productivity and Shared Services item 92 (Department of Defence, 2009, p. 19) acknowledges a “capacity to provide postings for training, respite, career needs and for family compassionate reasons will be maintained” and Carer provisions could be seated within this policy framework.

Durable support for Carers in Defence is highly reliant on Government policy and priorities and none are more obvious at present time than the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS, 2014, www.ndis.gov.au). Concerns have been raised regarding policy planning for NDIS, as it applies to families of Defence personnel, and has not considered portability of packages to overseas destinations. Under current funding provisions, a range of supports for children of Defence families
with a disability are provided by States and Territories and are not transferable. For instance, if provision of a wheelchair falls under South Australian jurisdiction and an affected family is posted to Queensland, then this wheelchair is forfeited and the family have to undergo an application process in their new jurisdiction. As of 2016, NDIS implementation should effectively ensure resources are not stripped from families as a result of relocation. Unfortunately, an absence of provision for NDIS portability to overseas postings for families of personnel means Defence will somehow need to anticipate ways to negotiate a memorandum of understanding, or provide for funding shortfalls that are not currently covered within *Department of Defence Pay and Conditions Manual* (Department of Defence, 2014, volume 2, chapter 8, part 6).

While current deployment packages anticipate planning for active Defence personnel to not return from duty; there are no parameters for recognition of Carer duties. The process of deployment addresses a range of family and property considerations and insertion of a question regarding Carer status could easily be included to anticipated succession planning for Defence families (Department of Defence, Defence Community Organisation, 2014).

Enduring support for family members of Defence personnel who are Carers is highly reliant on the Australian Government and Department of Defence acknowledging the unique and transient nature of Defence families. To ensure ongoing sustainability of Defence Community Organisation (Department of Defence, 2012, pp. 21, 34), families must be perceived as being central to optimum Defence capability. Families are potential support service personnel and should be fully costed because they represent value for money (Department of Defence, 2009, p. 10) as ongoing stakeholders to Department of Defence personnel.
4 Recommendations

The Department of Defence have a moral and statutory responsibility to Carers, as outlined in this paper which recommends:

1. The Department of Defence honours its obligations to Carers under the Carer Recognition Act 2010 and the way in which the Public Service Act 1999 is interpreted within policies, processes and programs;

2. The Department of Defence capture data about Carers in, and of Defence and articulate findings in both quantitative and qualitative sets to assist substantiation of the level of need for Carer recognition; and

3. The Department of Defence accept that recognition of Carers creates the paradigm shift in workforce culture that meets its defined goal of giving “confidence to the Australian people
that Defence is a just, inclusive and fair-minded organisation” (Department of Defence, 2012, p. 10).

5 Reference List


5. *Carer Recognition Act 2010*, (Commonwealth of Australia) No.123 including Schedule 1


6 Appendix

Schedule 1 - The Statement for Australia’s Carers (Carer Recognition Act 2010)

1. All Carers should have the same rights, choices and opportunities as other Australians, regardless of age, race, sex, disability, sexuality, religious or political beliefs, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage, cultural or linguistic differences, socioeconomic status or locality.

2. Children and young people who are Carers should have the same rights as all children and young people and should be supported to reach their full potential.

3. The valuable social and economic contribution that Carers make to society should be recognised and supported.

4. Carers should be supported to enjoy optimum health and social wellbeing and to participate in family, social and community life.
5. Carers should be acknowledged as individuals with their own needs within and beyond the caring role.

6. The relationship between Carers and the persons for whom they care should be recognised and respected.

7. Carers should be considered as partners with other care providers in the provision of care, acknowledging the unique knowledge and experience of Carers.

8. Carers should be treated with dignity and respect.

9. Carers should be supported to achieve greater economic wellbeing and sustainability and, where appropriate, should have opportunities to participate in employment and education.

10. Support for Carers should be timely, responsive, appropriate and accessible.