



An Organisation Guide to Fostering a Carer-Inclusive Workplace Culture



An Australian Government Initiative



**Carer-Inclusive
Workplace
Initiative**

What Is Workplace Culture?

Culture is made up of shared values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, essentially “the way we do things around here.” In the workplace, culture is collective, shaping what’s expected, what’s considered normal, and how the organisation performs. It can positively or negatively affect employees and relationships with customers and partners. A supportive, carer-inclusive culture helps carers thrive by encouraging them to speak up and seek support when needed. As every organisation (and even teams within it) has a unique culture, changing it requires a thoughtful, structured approach to embed lasting change.

A simple framework for culture change

Creating a carer-inclusive workplace isn’t one action it’s a journey.

Key steps:

1. Articulate the ‘Reason Why’

2. Manage Stakeholders

3. Set a clear vision

4. Put a Plan in Place

5. Communicate often

6. Take action

7. Role-model supportive leadership

8. Review and refresh

Change isn’t linear,
you may revisit
steps along the way.

1. Articulate the Reason Why

People need a strong reason to change.

Focus on:

- The business case for supporting carers
- The risks of not acting
- The benefits for engagement, retention, and performance

To help build a business case for change, check out the [‘Why Care for Carers’](#) resource for more guidance.

Revisit the “reason why” if momentum slows

2. Manage Stakeholders

Culture change only works with the right people on board.

What to do:

- Identify key stakeholders (leaders, employees, unions, customers, etc.)
- Assess their influence and impact
- Decide how to engage each group

Pay extra attention to:

- High-influence supporters (future advocates)
- Potential blockers (address concerns early)
- Carer champions across teams and locations

Champions help promote change and provide realtime feedback.



3. Set a Clear Vision

Be clear about where you're heading.

A good vision is:

- Short and simple
- Easy to repeat
- Relevant to everyday work

Embed the vision into:

- Strategy and policies
- Recruitment materials
- Internal communications

Champions and leaders should model the vision in action.

Examples of organisational statements that can be used in different formats can be found [here](#).

4. Put a Plan in Place

Culture change comes from multiple, practical actions over time.

Start with a gap analysis:

- What do we do now?
- What do we want to do better?
- What needs to change?

Helpful actions include:

- Staff surveys or focus groups
- Reviewing existing policies and practices
- Assessing manager capability

Each action should clearly state:

- What will happen
- Who is responsible
- When it will be delivered
- Resources required

Examples of practical actions:

- Promote your carer-inclusive commitment in places such as your intranet, posters in your workplace and during team meetings.
- Have the right people policies and process in place. These could include [personal/carers leave](#), [flexible working](#), [remote/home working](#). You may wish to establish a specific [Carer Inclusive policy](#).
- Actively enable a wide range of [flexible working options](#).
- Support [job crafting](#)
- Create a central [Carers Hub](#)
- Train managers to have [confident conversations](#)
- Build regular [wellbeing checkins](#)
- Enhance benefits and return to work support for carers

Consider whether some actions should apply to all employees (including those that are not currently carers) to maximise benefits and reduce perceived inequity.



5. Communicate Often

Communication should be ongoing and twoway.

Effective communication includes:

- Listening to feedback (even when it's critical)
- Regular updates on progress and outcomes
- Multiple formats (meetings, intranet, videos, policies)

Prepare for scepticism:

- Reinforce the business case
- Appeal to shared values
- Remind staff that anyone can become a carer

Plan how this message will live on long-term (e.g. induction, manager training).

6. Take Action

Prevent change fatigue by:

- Prioritising and then celebrating quick wins.
- Phasing longer-term actions
- Celebrating progress often

Apply sound project management, confirm resources upfront, and celebrate progress regularly.



7. Role-model Supportive Leadership

Managers are critical to success.

They need:

- Empathy
- Confidence
- Clear guidance on available supports

Support managers through:

- Ongoing training
- Clear frameworks
- Visible support for managers who are carers themselves.

What leaders do matters more than what they say.

8. Review and Refresh

A carer-inclusive culture can deliver:

- Improved staff retention
- Reduced turnover costs
- Reduced stress and sick leave
- Reduced absenteeism
- Improved staff morale and engagement
- Improved Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

To maintain impact:

- Review progress at least annually (and more frequently in the short term which change is being embedded)
- Adjust to incorporate any new legislation or changes to best practice
- Assign clear ownership within your organisation for ongoing review

About us

The Carer-Inclusive Workplace Initiative is a collaboration between the Australian Government and Carers Australia.

The aim of the project is to recognise the valuable contributions of carers and create a more inclusive, supportive workplace for Australians who provide unpaid care in the community.

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