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The role of the personal carer in Australia's community care environment is crucial for quality service delivery. Carers carry the greatest load in terms of the daily support provided to the frail aged, to those with a disability and to primary carers. The role, however, is not without dilemmas and stresses because the carer has to always be alert to boundaries of appropriate practice in the carer's tasks. The carer is not licensed to undertake the tasks associated with the roles and duties of other members of the service delivery team – especially those of enrolled nurses and Registered Nurses.

Of course, the environment in which aged care workers participate continues to be a highly dynamic one. For example, one of the most significant issues to arise from the 2009/10 recession was how recovering economies would cope with the looming pressures of the retiring baby boomers on health and pension programs. In this context alone, aged care and those who work in the sector will be subject to ongoing policy change and funding concerns. Aged care workers will need above all to be up to date in their skills and flexible in their approach.

Caring in the Community: A training manual for home and community carers seeks to be sensitive to the particular information needs and skills set of the personal carer in the Australian context. It is practically focused and directs carers to work with their supervisors and other members of the care team in an appropriately professional manner.

The training manual had its genesis in a range of training materials that I developed for aged care workers; these have been used and modified over more than a decade on the basis of carer and aged care facility feedback. I am most grateful for the contribution over the years of aged care training colleagues and – most importantly – of students training to be carers.

A final thank you needs to go to Sarah Dempsey and her colleagues at Pearson Australia. *Caring in the Community* is a direct result of Sarah and her team's professionalism and encouragement.

Helen Croft