

Communique – November 2022

The Queensland Carers Advisory Council met on 1 November 2022 for the third meeting of its 2022–24 term.

Dr Chris Sarra, Director-General, Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (the department) chaired the meeting.

Other attendees were: Ms Slawka Bell (Deputy Chair), Ms Natalie Bird, Ms Melissa Williams, Dr Nancy Spencer, Ms Debra Cottrell (Carers Queensland), Mr Adam Campbell (Wellways Australia), Ms Robynne Cooper (Anglicare, Central Queensland) and Ms Irene Clelland (Arafmi). The Department of Education was also represented.

Members welcomed Mr Nick Dwyer, Deputy Public Guardian, who replaces Ms Lisa Pritchard on the council.

The Chair updated members on actions taken by the department out-of-session, including:

- funding research on carer wellbeing commissioned with Health Consumers Queensland undertaking 10 'kitchen table' discussions
- a carers identifier was added to the annual Working for Queensland staff survey of the Queensland Public Service which will provide information on a cohort of working carers
- the development of the Grandparents Day promotional toolkit which assists organisations and individuals to promote Grandparents Day.

Members provided updates on the many successful events that occurred during National Carers Week (16-22 October 2022) and Grandparents Day (31 October 2022) including a men's golfing event and LGBTIQ cabaret show during Carers Week. ABC Radio National dedicated a broadcasting day to grandparents.

The Carer Friendly Business Awards, the premier event in Carers week, which recognises and celebrates employers, employees and businesses that make life better for carers saw 100 people in attendance.

It was reported that carers attending these events welcomed the opportunity to get back to face-to-face interaction for sharing support and experiences.

It was noted that the findings of the 2022 Carer Wellbeing Survey are now available online at <https://www.carersaustralia.com.au/carers-wellbeing-survey/>.

Mr Rhett Chapman, UnitingCare Community, provided information about the state-wide Time for Grandparents program for full-time grandparent carers of grandchildren. Members heard that 420 grandparents are registered as participating in the program. The program runs four or five camps over the year which provide: respite for grandparents; opportunities to connect with other grandparent carers; connection to services and other activities that support the grandparent; opportunities for grandchildren to connect with each other. Members supported activities to improve awareness of this valuable program.

A focus of discussion at this meeting was the next steps and actions to progress the review of the *Carers (Recognition) Act 2008* which the council aims to have completed by Carers Week 2023. Council members will continue to provide input to the review, as well as consultation with their networks as the work progresses.

Council members shared their ideas for projects to advance the interests of carers. Further work will occur to reach a shortlist of projects for possible funding.