



## Queensland Carers Advisory Council Communique – March 2025

The Queensland Carers Advisory Council (the Council) met on 18 March 2025.

Jim Toohey (Managing Director, Carers Queensland) was welcomed by Council members as the new Chair appointed January 2025. Carer representatives Melissa Williams and Dr Nancy Spencer attended the meeting as well as Grandparent carer representative, Slawka Bell. Organisational representatives Louise Faulkner (Wellways Carer Gateway) and Irene Clelland (Arafmi) also attended. The Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety (DFSDSCS) (the department), Queensland Health and Office of the Public Guardian were represented. Department of Education was not represented at this meeting.

Council received an update from Deloitte Access Economics on a carers data and service mapping project, commissioned by the department on behalf of the Council. This work will inform the Council's advisory role to the Minister to advance the interests of Queensland carers.

The Council considered the National Carer Strategy 2024-2034 and Action Plan 2024-27 released in December 2024 and noted close alignment of actions in the National Action Plan 2024-27 with priority areas of the Queensland Carers Action Plan 2024-26. Opportunities for advocacy were discussed, particularly in the areas of carer respite, employment and workforce retention for carers, support for carers personally and emotionally and how to strengthen carer recognition and self-identification.

The Council was updated on the progress of Queensland Government disability reform processes. The Council heard about key priorities for 2025-26 under the Queensland Disability Reform Framework, including ongoing stakeholder engagement and phased implementation of responses to the Disability Royal Commission recommendations, and opportunities for Council and carer engagement in co-design activities.

The Council heard from the Secretariat of the Education, Arts and Communities Committee about Terms of Reference and processes associated with the Parliamentary Inquiry into Elder Abuse. The Committee acknowledged carers as key partners in supporting older Queenslanders and noted the Committee was keen to hear from carers with lived experience and carers support organisations. Carers and carer support organisations were invited to make submissions to the Inquiry. Council noted submissions close on 10 April 2025 with further information available at:

[www.parliament.qld.gov.au/elderabuse](http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/elderabuse).

The Council discussed a review of the *Carers (Recognition) Act 2008*, including key issues and next steps, which remains a priority for the Council under the *Queensland Carers Action Plan 2024-26*. A presentation on Queensland Government programs to address Social Isolation and Loneliness was received with interest by the Council, noting that research and evaluation findings for carers and care recipients from specific initiatives will inform advice provided by the Council's regarding social isolation experienced by carers.

The Council discussed priorities for their 2025-26 workplan with a focus on social connectedness, impacts of NDIS services losses on carers, and employment and training opportunities. Project proposals will be developed for consideration by the Council at its next meeting. Projects endorsed by the Council for delivery will be funded from the annual budget allocation of \$150,000 for projects that advance the interests of carers.

Council members noted that their term finishes on 31 January 2026 and that planning for a recruitment process for the next Council term from 2026-28 has commenced.