

Queensland Carers Advisory Council Meeting Communiqué

4 March 2019

The Queensland Carers Advisory Council met for the first time this year on Monday 4 March 2019 to discuss a range of issues affecting carers, particularly the health and wellbeing of the people who carry out caring roles.

The Honourable Coralee O'Rourke MP, Minister for Disability Services and Seniors attended the meeting to talk to council members and hear carers' concerns first-hand.

Mrs O'Rourke said Carers Queensland also presented the findings of its 2018 Quality of Life Audit.

"Themes arising from this report included carers' financial insecurity, their social isolation and loneliness, safety concerns, and the adverse impact of these on carers' physical and mental health," she said.

"The Council then discussed influencing factors, vulnerable groups, challenges for carers and actions to improve the health and wellbeing of carers.

"Members advocated that improving recognition of the contribution of carers, improving workplace culture and practices, and increasing access to respite would make a real difference to the lives of carers.

"Discussions also focused on the need for assistance for carers to access services, extending access to the Australian Government Carer Payment for grandparent carers and access to bulk billing general practitioner services for all carers."

Teresa Pilbeam, Semah Mokak-Wischki, Louise Jessop and Kirsty Buckley (grandparent carer) and representatives from organisations that support carers: Debra Cottrell (Carers Queensland), Sarah Mitchell (Centacare) and Tracy Field (UnitingCare) attended the meeting.

A representative from the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women also attended the meeting to provide information on the process under which children may be taken into kinship or foster care under the *Child Protection Act 1999* and support available for families.

Members expressed concern that grandparents caring for a grandchild without a child protection order are not eligible for the fostering allowance and other support through organisations supporting foster carers.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 2019.

