

# Queensland Carers Advisory Council

## Meeting Communiqué

### 2 March 2020

The Queensland Carers Advisory Council held its first meeting for the year on Monday 2 March 2020, to discuss a range of issues affecting carers. This was the final meeting of the existing two-year term of the Council.

Members were invited to extend their term on the Council for an additional 12 months pending approval by the Honourable Coralee O'Rourke MP, Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors and support by the Honourable Annastacia Palaszczuk, Premier and Minister for Trade.

Present at the meeting were carers, Teresa Pilbeam (Deputy Chair), Semah Mokak-Wischki and Louise Jessop; organisational representatives, Debra Cottrell (Carers Queensland), Sarah Mitchell (Centacare), Donna Shkalla (UnitingCare) and Irene Clelland (Arafmi); and government representatives from the Department of Education, Queensland Health, Office of the Public Guardian, Department of Justice and Attorney General, and the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (DCDSS).

Minister O'Rourke was pleased to see the achievements of the final 2019 work plan in the three key focus areas of: health and wellbeing including grandparent carers; carer legislation and policy; and data collection and demographic information. The Council discussed and identified initial priorities that could be included in the 2020 work plan such as training, education and employment, mental health and wellbeing of carers, planning for the future and carer visibility.

Irene Clelland provided information and an overview of Arafmi's work and research on carers including some of the issues experienced by carers as well as the 'Being Visible' campaign run in February and March 2020. As the organisation is supported by volunteers, members acknowledged the importance of volunteers receiving appropriate training to support individuals.

A guest speaker from Disability Connect Queensland, DCDSS provided an update on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and members had the opportunity to discuss their concerns. Queensland Government had received an additional \$20M from the Australian Government to be utilised in four key areas of the NDIS including assessment and referral teams, funded outreach, better conversion rate of plans and attending to any issues accessing the system.

Members heard about The Select Committee on Autism that was established by The Senate in November 2019. The Committee will inquire into and report on the services, support and life outcomes for people with autism living in Australia, the associated need for a National Autism Strategy and provide its final report on or before the first sitting day of October 2021. Guests from Strategic Policy and Legislation, DCDSS provided a copy of the Terms of Reference to members and advised that the Minister will be providing a submission to the Select Committee on Autism recommending that The Committee advocate for people with disability. Discussion was held with Council members as key stakeholders to receive feedback on this matter.

Chairperson thanked members for their contribution during the two-year term and the achievements of the 2019 work plan.