

Communique – September 2023

The Queensland Carers Advisory Council met on 5 September 2023, the fifth meeting of its 2022–24 term.

Ms Kate Connors, Acting Director-General, Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (the department) chaired the meeting, assisted by the Deputy Chair, Ms Slawka Bell.

Ms Slawka Bell (Deputy Chair), Ms Natalie Bird, Ms Melissa Williams, Dr Nancy Spencer, Ms Sarah Bone (Carers Queensland), Ms Robynne Cooper (Anglicare, Central Queensland) and Ms Irene Clelland (Arafmi) attended the meeting. Queensland Health was also represented. Representatives from Wellways and the Office of the Public Guardian were not able to attend the meeting.

Minister Crawford welcomed members and acknowledged their valuable advice based on their lived experience as carers. He thanked members for their commitment to promoting the interests of carers, particularly acknowledging the recent 'Care is Everywhere' campaign ([Care Is Everywhere - Carers Queensland \(carersqld.com.au\)](https://carersqld.com.au)) and its impact in raising awareness of caring roles and availability of services and supports for carers.

He noted that the Carers Action Plan was published on the department website on 23 August 2023 ([Carers Action Plan - Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services \(dcssds.qld.gov.au\)](https://dcssds.qld.gov.au)).

Minister Crawford also confirmed State Budget 2023-24 had delivered an allocation of \$150,000 ongoing affirming the Queensland Government commitment to recognising the importance of carers and promoting the objectives and principles of the Queensland Carers Charter.

Members were updated on actions taken by the department since the last meeting and updates on key QCAC projects were provided. Findings of the 2022 *Working for Queensland* survey were noted with some discussion on challenges experienced by working carers.

Representatives of Queensland Health also presented on the Long Stay Rapid Response program, an initiative that safely supports long-stay patients to discharge from hospital.

Members discussed the progress of the Commonwealth's Inquiry into the recognition of unpaid carers: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Social_Policy_and_Legal_Affairs/UnpaidCarers.

Members also discussed priority issues for action in 2023-24 to advance the interests of Queensland carers. Further work will occur to reach a shortlist of projects for possible funding, building on projects QCAC has already commenced that will:

- raise awareness of the diversity of carers, the people they care for, the social and economic value of carers, and services available to them
- promote the Carer Business Discount and Companion cards
- consider actions to recognise and address issues experienced by working carers
- provide resources to assist grandparent carers to access supports and services
- deliver an enhanced campaign for Grandparents Day in 2023
- provide resources with guidance and practical tips for clinicians, GPs, services in Queensland on how to engage families, carers and kin in a person's care.