



Speech by

**Andrew Powell**

**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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## **CARERS (RECOGNITION) AMENDMENT BILL AND SENIORS RECOGNITION (GRANDPARENTS PROVIDING CARE) BILL**

**Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (8.48 pm): I, too, rise to contribute to the cognate debate on the Carers (Recognition) Amendment Bill and the shadow minister's Seniors Recognition (Grandparents Providing Care) Bill. I am pleased to acknowledge and applaud a sector of our community who freely invest their time, money and effort into the development and care of their loved ones.

Grandparents who provide homes and care for their grandchildren—whether it is because of the impaired capacity of a parent, because of an unreasonable risk posed by a parent or due to the inability or unwillingness of a parent to provide full-time care—currently undertake the taxing task with little support or recognition for their efforts. Currently, the rights and needs of grandparents providing care for their grandchildren are not recognised. There is no legislative framework for seniors carer bodies to have influence or have their views considered in decisions by authorities that affect grandparents providing care for their grandchildren.

The Carers (Recognition) Amendment Bill falls short of addressing these issues, ignoring the need for consultation before making decisions that affect grandparents who care for their grandchildren. The definition of a grandparent providing care in the Carers (Recognition) Amendment Bill is limited to those who live with the child or those in a decision-making role. This definition also excludes those grandparents who care for the child while the parents work or where the grandparent lives with both the parent and the child. I am sure you can appreciate that these exclusions could have broad implications for grandparents caring for their grandchildren in areas ranging from accessing health care and access to information to even signing school permission forms.

Furthermore, the Carers (Recognition) Amendment Bill simply adds grandparents acting as carers of their grandchildren to the Carers (Recognition) Act, which groups grandparents with those who provide care for people with disabilities or who are infirm, aged or incapacitated. This grouping has led to a great deal of confusion, as there is no correlation between the two sectors. This comparison has caused frustration from both seniors carer bodies and disability groups. While I commend the Carers (Recognition) Amendment Bill for recognising the need for support of grandparents who are caring for their grandchildren, I believe that the restrictive exclusions and the lack of consultation concerning decisions affecting grandparent carers does not provide grandparents with the support and the respect they deserve. This is why I instead support the shadow minister's bill.

The Seniors Recognition (Grandparents Providing Care) Bill would support grandparents providing care to their grandchildren by recognising their role as full-time carers and giving them official status as immediate family members. If passed, this bill will establish the Grandparent Carers Charter, which recognises the important and unique position that grandparents providing care hold in the community. The Grandparent Carers Charter is similar to the Carers Charter, forming the basis of a legislative framework that recognises the positive contribution that grandparents providing care make to the community. The charter states—

1. The State recognises the effort and dedication of grandparents in our community and the vital community service they perform.
2. The State recognises that grandparents who provide full-time care to their grandchildren are primary care givers and deserve the same rights as other primary care givers.
3. The relationship between grandparent and grandchild should be honoured and respected.
4. The State recognises that grandparents providing full-time care to their grandchildren should be respected by our community and supported by all levels of government, institutions and organisations.
5. The views and needs of grandparents, providing full-time care to their grandchildren, must be taken into account, together with the views, needs and best interests of their grandchildren, when making decisions that may affect either the grandchild or the ability of the grandparent to provide fulltime care.
6. Grandparents should be recognised for the unique knowledge, love and experience they contribute to their grandchildren's growth through formative years.

The establishment of this charter will ensure that grandparents who provide care have the chance to have their views and opinions taken into account by public authorities which make decisions that affect grandparents and their grandchildren. It will recognise the time, effort and money that grandparents who provide care spend in order to ensure the best outcome for their grandchildren. In addition, grandparents who provide full-time care for their grandchildren will be recognised as primary caregivers.

The relationship between grandparents providing care and the grandchildren they care for is extremely important, and it is my hope that the shadow minister's bill, when passed, will strengthen the support and respect of grandparents caring for their grandchildren in the community. I commend this bill to the House.