



Speech by

Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard Tuesday, 8 June 2010

CARERS (RECOGNITION) AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (12.49 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Carers (Recognition) Act 2008 for particular purposes. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Tabled paper: Carers (Recognition) Amendment Bill [[2336](#)].

Tabled paper: Carers (Recognition) Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [[2337](#)].

Second Reading

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (12.50 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Bligh government has a strong record of supporting seniors and carers. On 24 May this year at community cabinet on the Gold Coast, the Premier launched Positively Ageless—Queensland Seniors Strategy 2010-20. This strategy introduces Grandparents Day to celebrate the contribution of grandparents and their important role in the community, and establishes a new grandparents information hotline, to be run by Lifeline, to improve information for grandparents about services and resources for grandparents.

The amendments proposed in the Carers (Recognition) Amendment Bill 2010 today would make Queensland the first state to legislatively recognise grandparents providing full-time care for their grandchildren. The government proposes amendments to the Carers (Recognition) Act 2008 to extend the existing legislation to specifically recognise the interests of grandparents.

There are approximately 14,000 Australian families in which a grandparent or grandparents are the main carers for their grandchildren. These grandparents, many of whom have completed their child-rearing days with their own children, step up to meet their grandchildren's need for stability and continuity of care. Grandchildren may come to live with grandparents for a range of reasons.

The government's bill will:

- extend the definition of carers to recognise grandparents as full-time carers for their grandchildren where the child lives with the grandparent and the grandparent is the primary caregiver and decision maker for the child;

- extend the functions of the Carers Advisory Council, which already exists under provisions of the Queensland carers act, to include working to advance the interests of grandparents providing full-time care for their grandchildren;
- expand the membership of the Carers Advisory Council to include two positions for grandparent carers providing full-time care for their grandchildren or a representative body of grandparent carers;
- amend the existing Queensland Carers Charter—again established under the Queensland carers act—to include recognition of the invaluable role that grandparents providing full-time care for their grandchildren play in the lives of their grandchildren, and to include a further two new principles in the charter which would recognise grandparents providing full-time care for their grandchildren and assure them of access to information that supports them in their role.

The government's bill will also more closely align the Queensland carers act with the recently introduced Commonwealth Carer Recognition Bill in that it will require public authorities to apply the principles of the Queensland Carers Charter in their human resource policies.

We have long recognised the invaluable contribution of all carers who provide ongoing care and assistance to those in need. The Queensland carers act recognises the selfless support of unpaid carers who provide ongoing care to a person because of disability, frailty, chronic illness or pain in the Queensland Carers Charter. The act also establishes the Carers Advisory Council to advance the interests of carers.

Today, through these new amendments we will further strengthen the carers act. The proposed amendments will ensure that strong legislative recognition of grandparent carers is established in Queensland and that there is a practical application of their interests as part of government decision making. As well as the initiatives proposed for grandparents through our seniors strategy, the government's bill represents a tangible and clear legal framework through which to provide grandparent carers with the recognition they well deserve.