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Following consultation with Carers NSW, the MP for Bega, the Hon. Andrew Constance, announced in Parliament in December his intention to introduce a Private Member's Bill – the Carers' Recognition Act - in the first sitting of Parliament this year.

This is very exciting news for carers in NSW! It has been a long time coming ...

Last year the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth report: *Who Cares ...?* Report on the inquiry into better support for carers, Canberra, 29 October 2009 stated:

“Central to the response is a commitment to ensure that carers are appropriately recognised and for this to be driven by strong national leadership. The Commonwealth Government will introduce Commonwealth carer recognition legislation in 2010. Following this, we will lead the development of a national carer recognition framework including a national carer strategy which complements and builds on state and territory carer recognition legislation and policies. The development of a national carer recognition framework will include consideration of, among other things, the training and skills development needs of carers and the adequacy of case management and care coordination for carers.”

The Benefits for Carers of the Proposed NSW State Legislation

Currently, NSW has no carer legislation, unlike WA, SA, NT, Qld and ACT. This proposed Private Member's Bill, if passed, will bring us in line with other states and territories in having legislation that recognises and supports carers, and which will provide legislation for proposed Commonwealth legislation to build on.

It is true that carers were recognised by the NSW Government through its introduction of the NSW Carers Action Plan 2007-2012 and the inclusion of carers in the 2009 NSW State Plan, Healthy Communities initiative. This Bill builds upon these beginnings and is a significant step forward. It will mean that for the first time carers in NSW will have legal recognition. The Bill will have a charter, or set of principles, for all who work with unpaid family carers. It will ensure carers are seen as co-clients with needs in their own right and entitled to their own assessment. Final details of the legislation will be available once the Bill has been introduced into Parliament.

Carers NSW seeks your support for the Carers' Recognition Act

The best way to ensure this Bill gets passed in Parliament is to ensure it is supported by all parties. Carers NSW is talking to MPs from all parties to seek their support. ***Please help by contacting your local State MP and expressing your support for the Bill to be introduced by Andrew Constance.*** We will announce on the Carers NSW website when the Bill is to be introduced, but don't wait until then! Get your friends, support group, families, neighbours to be vocal in their support for this Bill – write letters, talk to your local papers.

We have been advocating for carer legislation in NSW for a long time. Let's make sure this Bill gets passed! Watch our website www.carersnsw.asn.au for news of this Bill as it breaks.