

12 March 2010

## **Carers Recognition Bill tabled, now let's see it passed!**

In NSW Parliament this morning, the Member for Bega, the Hon Andrew Constance introduced the Carers NSW Recognition Bill 2010.

In introducing the Bill, Mr Constance acknowledged the 750,000 carers in NSW and the need for a bi-partisan approach to deliver long overdue support to carers.

The NSW Carers Recognition Bill 2010 will establish a NSW Carers Charter and a NSW Ministerial Advisory Council for Carers, which will be co-chaired by the relevant Ministers responsible for carers. The majority of Council members will be current carers from the diversity of disability, frail aged, chronic and mental illness sectors.

Mr Constance referred to the importance of the Charter in identifying carers as individuals in their own right (not just in relation to those they care for) with their own their own support needs and right to assessment.

The MP acknowledged that currently carers' needs are not separately considered, and that as a result, carers suffer social isolation, financial hardship and very low levels of health and wellbeing.

Mr Constance thanked Carers NSW for their significant contributions to the development of the Bill, and acknowledged the carers present in the Visitor's Gallery, as well as those not present.

Carers NSW President, Laraine Toms, acknowledged: "This is a great first step."

"It is now of the utmost importance for all MPs to get behind the Bill and vote it through. Action is overdue and carers can't afford to wait any longer."

"We are encouraging carers, friends, colleagues and the community at large to contact their local MP and show support for this important piece of legislation."

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