

13 May 2010

## **An historic day for carers – NSW Carer Recognition legislation passed**

In a win for the 750,000 unpaid carers in NSW, the Government's Carers (Recognition) Bill 2010 has been passed, with NSW Parliamentarians showing bipartisan support for the legislation.

The carer legislation was passed in both the NSW Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council following an unprecedented show of support from Members of Parliament.

"Today is a wonderful day for carers," said Laraine Toms, President of Carers NSW.

"NSW has now come into line with other states and territories in formally recognising carers as individuals in their own right, not just in relation to the person they care for. In addition, the legislation in NSW, unlike that in other states and territories, provides for assessment of carers of their own health and other needs."

The legislation will:

- Enact a NSW Carers Charter to recognise the role and contribution of those who care for family or friends who have a disability, a medical condition (such as a terminal or chronic illness), a mental illness or who are frail and aged.
- Require certain public sector agencies to take action to reflect the principles of the NSW Carers Charter when providing services that affect carers.
- Establish a Carers Advisory Council (with primary carers the majority of members and a Minister to Chair).

"NSW parliamentarians are to be commended for their ongoing commitment to this process," said Laraine Toms.

"We are looking forward to politicians showing ongoing support for carers through our Parliamentary Friends of Carers NSW group, currently being established."

On 11 May, Members of Parliament spoke at length about the need to acknowledge and support unpaid carers, who save NSW taxpayers around \$10 billion annually (the cost of replacing informal care with paid care workers).

"I believe there is not a member in this House, regardless of political persuasion, who has not seen first hand in the communities in which they live and represent the many challenges that carers face," said Andrew Constance, Member for Bega.

The Deputy Premier, Carmel Tebbutt said: "I acknowledge the vital role that all carers in New South Wales play in our community. I applaud their contribution to our community. The passage of this bill will provide carers in New South Wales will the formal recognition that they so wholeheartedly deserve."

Carers NSW was also acknowledged by parliamentarians, not only for its contributions to the development of the legislation, but also for its ongoing commitment to and services for carers.



## MEDIA RELEASE

“Carers NSW has worked for many years towards this important step,” said Elena Katrakis, CEO of Carers NSW.

“But it is just the beginning. We will continue to work to implement the legislation that will provide more choices and supports for carers.”

**Media Contact:** Nina Olle, 02 9280 4744/0400 061 100