

Peter Primrose MLC

Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services
Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteering



Wednesday, November 24, 2010

Members of inaugural Carers Advisory Council announced

The members of the first NSW Carers Advisory Council have been announced today.

The Minister for Disability Services, Peter Primrose, who will chair the new council, said members would advise the NSW Government on issues affecting carers and the people they care for.

“The Carers Council will give a direct voice to the 750,000 carers in NSW who play a vital role in caring for people with a disability, people with mental illness or chronic illness, older people and people with dementia,” Mr Primrose said.

“There are also more than 90,000 carers under the age of 25 in NSW.

“A recent Access Economics national report estimated the replacement value of the care provided by informal carers at more than \$40 billion a year.

“Governments alone could not possibly cope with such a task, however, carers provide more than just an economic benefit, they are part of people’s lives, often family or friends, who can provide love and support for people in need.

“The 14 members of the council, who come from around NSW, will represent the diversity of backgrounds and interests in the community.”

Ten members of the council are primary carers and the remaining four members include Elena Katrakis, Chief Executive Officer of Carers NSW and Professor Deborah Brennan from the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales.

Two senior government representatives have also been appointed.

Mr Primrose said that the quality of applicants was outstanding, with more than 190 applications received.

“The 10 carers will offer a range of perspectives, expertise and experience gained through many years of caring, plus a great deal of passion and commitment to advancing the interests of carers across the state,” Mr Primrose said.

“I look forward to working with the Council and receiving their advice on the best ways to enhance public recognition of the needs and vital contributions of carers, and to improve practical support for them in their caring role.”

Please see biographies of Carers Advisory Council members attached.

For more information visit: www.dadhc.nsw.gov.au/dadhc/Carers/

Members of the 2010-11 NSW Carers Advisory Council

1. Deborah BEWICK

Deborah Bewick from Wagga Wagga in south west NSW, brings to the Carers Advisory Council over 15 years experience of being a primary carer for her daughter who has a severe intellectual disability and challenging behaviours. Mrs Bewick has experienced the impact of policies and services on carers and has practical ideas for improvements that could better support carers and their families. She also brings a valuable non-metropolitan perspective from her strong links with other regional and rural carers in her local community.

2. Nancy BOSLER OAM

Nancy Bosler, from the Northern Beaches of Sydney, is an older carer who has had both personal and professional experience of carer issues. At different times she has cared for family members with a physical disability and dementia. Additionally, her working life included working with families of children with a disability. She has great strengths in creating partnerships and has a particular passion for the potential of technology to reduce carer isolation.

3. Mary Lou CARTER

Mary Lou Carter is the mother of two most cherished sons. Through her sons and immediate family she has seen the full spectrum of ability, disability and care. She also understands at an individual and strategic level that the needs of carer-families are inextricably linked to the needs of the people for whom they care. Mrs Carter also brings a multicultural perspective to the Carers Advisory Council, having cared for and supported elderly parents with very limited English language skills.

4. Maryann HOUSHAM

Maryann Housham, from San Remo, is a Maori woman who has strong links to Aboriginal communities in the Hunter and Central Coast areas. Her caring experience crosses generations, being both a parent and grandparent of family members with a disability that encompass both mental health and intellectual disability issues. Her particular passions are communicating with carers from a range of cultural backgrounds, and increasing carers' access to services and supports.

5. Elizabeth INGRAM

Elizabeth Ingram is an Aboriginal carer from Lake Cathie on the Mid North Coast of NSW. With over 20 years' experience of caring for two family members with a mental illness, she brings to the Carers Advisory Council both a personal understanding of carer issues as well as a wealth of experience in supporting other carers in her community, including the development of practical carer resources.

6. Cheryl KOENIG

Cheryl Koenig from Menai in Sydney was thrust into the caring role 13 years ago when her son, aged 12 years old, was hit by a car. She has become an effective representative for people with brain injuries and their carers and is widely recognised for her role as a carer and advocate for carers. She was NSW Woman of the Year in 2009, and is the author of a book about her caring experiences.

7. Carolyn QUINN

Ms Carolyn Quinn has had experience of caring for family members with an intellectual and sensory disability for 21 years. Over that time she has developed strong carer networks and has presented to various audiences on her experience as a primary carer. Carolyn has extensive experience working as a consultant across the human services sector, both with government and non government organisations. She brings a broad perspective to the Carers Advisory Council and through her personal and professional experiences has a strong commitment to improving services for people with a disability and their carers.

8. Catharine RETTER

Catharine Retter, from Naremburn in Sydney, is a board member of Alzheimer's Australia (NSW) and a member of the Consumer Dementia Research Network providing a consumer voice on dementia care research. For seven years she was the primary carer of a family member with dementia. She brings to the Carers Advisory Council excellent professional skills from the publishing industry, an interest in dementia as it affects both older and younger people and the family members who care for them, and a strong commitment to increasing the recognition of carers.

9. Peter STEVENS

Mr Peter Stevens, from North Sydney has an interest in dementia issues which is both personal and professional. For nine years he has been the primary carer for a family member with younger onset dementia. His professional interest led him to Chair the Alzheimer's Australia (NSW) Younger Onset Dementia Summit in 2009. His perspective as an older male carer, combined with experience gained in a corporate career, will be invaluable to the Carers Advisory Council.

10. Tabitha WILSON

Tabitha Wilson is a young woman from the Eden Monaro area. While only 18 and in her final year of high school, Ms Wilson has years of experience as a carer for family members with mental illness and chronic health issues. She has a particular passion for and ideas about how the caring role impacts on young carers' educational opportunities. With strong links to national and local young carer networks, Ms Wilson will be a valuable voice on the Carers Advisory Council.