

Media Release

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Tasmania's 80,000 informal carers formally recognised for the first time

Carers Tasmania, the state's Peak Body for carers, has welcomed the passing of legislation by the Legislative Council today that will, for the first time, formally recognise informal carers in the state.

"One in six houses across Tasmania has someone providing informal care. Each year, carers contribute over 2.2 billion hours of unpaid care nationally, which if replaced would cost \$77.9 billion," said CEO, David Brennan.

Informal carers in most cases are family members caring for someone with disability, mental ill health, chronic or life-limiting conditions, alcohol or other drug dependence or who is frail or aged.

Under the new legislation, informal kinship carers, who are most commonly grandparents, will also be recognised when they are caring for a child.

Tasmania is the last state or territory to legislate carer recognition.

"It is long overdue that they be seen, acknowledged and respected as a matter of law," said Mr Brennan.

A Carers Charter was promised by Opposition Leader, Rebecca White, in 2019 and by the Premier Jeremy Rockliff, as then Minister for Community Services and Development, during the last state election. Premier Rockliff was instrumental in making the Bill a 100-day priority following the election.

"I'm grateful to the Premier's leadership for ensuring that carer recognition was an election commitment and key priority," said Mr Brennan.

"I also want to thank Minister Nic Street, who has led the development of the Bill. His consultative and constructive approach has been instrumental in developing legislation and achieving this milestone."



Informal carers Mary Donovan and Margaret Little were at Parliament with Carers Tasmania to watch debate and the final passage of the Bill.

Mary, who cares for her husband with Huntington's Disease, was moved by the passing of the legislation.

"What a great feeling to be seen and valued by the Parliament," she said.

"I hope this legislation will assist more people to recognise that carers have needs too, like getting a break and the chance to connect with other carers," she said.

"I also hope that we carers stop being invisible to professionals in the health system and that our opinion is sought and valued."

Margaret is a kinship carer for her great-nephew with disability and was relieved that Tasmania has joined other states and territories to recognise carers.

"As a carer who also works, I hope this legislation brings change to all workplaces and means better understanding and greater flexibility by employers."

"I'm a kinship carer and I've never been able to access the same workplace entitlements."

Minister Street's announcement that he will elevate the voice of lived experience through the creation of the Minister's Carer Advisory Council was also welcomed by Carers Tasmania.

"The ability of carers to voice lived experience directly with the Minister through the Advisory Council is another significant and positive step forward," said Mr Brennan.

About Carers Tasmania

Carers Tasmania is the peak body representing the more than 80,000 informal carers in the state. Carers Tasmania's vision is for an Australia that values and supports carers. With a mission to work to improve the health, wellbeing, resilience, and financial security of carers and to ensure that caring is a shared responsibility of the family, community, and the government.

Carers Tasmania has offices in Hobart, Launceston, and Burnie.



About Carers

An informal, unpaid carer is often a family member who cares for someone with chronic or life-limiting illness, with mental health ill health, is frail or aged, with disability or alcohol or other drug dependence, or cares for a child under 18 years.

Informal carers are distinct from paid support workers, who are also colloquially called 'carers' but fully employed and remunerated with all the employment benefits.

Conversely, family carers perform their caring duties without remuneration, other than minimal carer payments and allowances from the Department of Social Services.

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