

Response to Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs Inquiry into the Disability Services and Inclusion Bill 2023 [Provisions] and Disability Services and Inclusion (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2023

September 2023

Carers Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs [Inquiry into the Disability Services and Inclusion Bill 2023 \[Provisions\] and Disability Services and Inclusion \(Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions\) Bill 2023](#) (the Bill). Carers Australia supports the introduction of this Bill to replace the *Disability Services Act 1986* and will use this submission to speak to the areas of the Bill that have direct relevance to Australian carers of people living with disability.

Carers Australia is pleased to observe that since initial consultation, additional steps have been taken to recognise carers and the support and care they provide to people living with disability. However, Carers Australia believes the Bill does not sufficiently recognise the role of carers as defined within the *Commonwealth Carer Recognition Act 2010* (the Act).

Whilst the Disability Services and Inclusion Bill 2023 recognises carers, it does not define carers within 'Division 2 – Definitions'. Carers Australia recommend the Bill be updated to define the term 'carer' with reference to the Act, recognising the Bill is limited to carers of people with disability.

As highlighted within Carers Australia's [Response to Department of Social Services \(the Department\) consultation for the Disability Services and Inclusion Bill 2023](#), a carer's role is distinctly different from parenting or generalised familial support and as such the policy responses and information needs are different. Carers Australia is supportive of efforts to influence respectful and inclusive language about people with disability; however, inclusivity must also extend to language related to carers and caring.

Within the context of carers, the use of clear and established definitions is strongly recommended to foster greater inclusivity of the diversity of carers, care relationships and those receiving care. The definition of carer within the Act provides important information clarifying when an individual providing care or support for an individual is not a carer. **As such, Carers Australia call for the Carer Recognition Act 2010 to be referenced within the Bill.**

Carers Australia recognises the extensive consultation undertaken in the drafting of this Bill and believes the Bill provides a significant opportunity to enable the design of new supports and services moving forward that better support people with disability, their carers and their families.

About Carers Australia

Carers Australia is the national peak body representing the diversity of the 2.65 million Australians who provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends with a disability, chronic condition, mental illness or disorder, drug or alcohol problem, terminal illness, or who are frail aged.

In collaboration with our members, the peak carer organisations in each state and territory, we collectively form the National Carer Network and are an established infrastructure that represents the views of carers at a national level.

Our vision is an Australia that values and supports all carers, where all carers should have the same rights, choices, and opportunities as other Australians to enjoy optimum health, social and economic wellbeing and participate in family, social and community life, employment, and education.

This includes carers:

- Who have their own care needs
- Who are in multiple care relationships
- Who have employment and/or education commitments
- Aged under 25 years (young carers)
- Aged over 65 years, including 'grandparent carers'
- From culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- Who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex (LGBTI+)
- Who are living in rural and remote Australia, and
- That are no longer in a caring role (former carers).

Carers Australia acknowledges Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities as the traditional custodians of the land we work on and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. As an inclusive organisation we celebrate people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, bodies, and abilities.

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