# Communique – July 2022

The Queensland Carers Advisory Council met on 27 July 2022 for the second meeting of the 2022-24 term of the Queensland Carers Advisory Council.

Dr Chris Sarra, Director-General, Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (the Department) Co-Chaired the meeting with Ms Slawka Bell (Deputy Chair).

Other attendees were Ms Natalie Bird, Ms Melissa Williams, Dr Nancy Spencer, Ms Debra Cottrell (Carers Queensland), Mr Adam Campbell (Wellways Australia) and Ms Robynne Cooper (Anglicare, Central Queensland). Queensland Health and the Department of Education were represented. Ms Irene Clelland (Arafmi) and the representative from the Office of the Public Guardian were not able to attend the meeting.

The Chair updated members on actions taken out-of-session, including discussions at the department’s Board of Management on the economic impact of caring on carers. The Board has undertaken to:

* consider carer’s issues when developing and reviewing human resources policy and programs
* ensure the department’s input to policy development processes across Government advocates for appropriate consultation with carer representatives
* influence the sector where possible, for example to promote carers issues across agencies.

A focus of discussion at this meeting was the needs of young carers.

Dr Nancy Spencer presented findings of research undertaken with Arafmi and Griffith University. The research identified that young carers (under 24 years old) are:

* more likely to female than male
* mostly caring for a parent, grandparent or sibling who most often have a physical illness, disability or mental health illness
* likely to experience social isolation, and may experience impacts on their own mental health
* likely to miss school or not have enough time for study at school or university
* likely to lose casual work or miss shifts because they need to provide care
* likely to face greater challenges if they are living in remote and regional areas.

The Council supported the recommendations to raise awareness of young carer issues within the community, and to advocate and support policy changes targeting carer income support, educational support, health and wellbeing support. Council noted that it was important to raise awareness among employers of young carers regarding their flexible work needs.

As part of their work this term, the Council will continue to focus on recognising the important role that carers play and raising awareness on the impact of the caring role on the health and well-being of carers.

The Council will provide advice to support the department’s engagement in National Carers week (16 to 22 October 2022) and Grandparents Day (30 October 2022).