

**Submission
No 1**

INQUIRY INTO 2020 REVIEW OF THE LIFETIME CARE AND SUPPORT SCHEME

Organisation: Carers NSW Australia

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16 October 2020

Law and Justice Committee
NSW Parliament
law@parliament.nsw.gov.au

2020 Review of the Lifetime Care and Support scheme

To whom it may concern,

Carers NSW would like to thank the Standing Committee on Law and Justice for the opportunity to make a submission to the 2020 review of the Lifetime Care and Support scheme.

Carers NSW is the peak non-government organisation for individuals in NSW who provide informal care and support to a family member or friend who has a disability, mental illness, drug or alcohol dependency, chronic condition, terminal illness or who is frail aged. We have provided feedback to the reviews of the Lifetime Care and Support Scheme (Lifetime Care) for a number of years and are pleased to be partnering with icare to support families of people who have been catastrophically injured through the wecare program.

We acknowledge and commend icare's continued efforts to engage with Carers NSW to expand and improve family support within Lifetime Care. Carers NSW is supportive of the ongoing projects that support families and carers, including the Strength 2 Strength program. We recognise that targeted carer support programs reflect the increasing awareness of carer needs and issues across the scheme.

Carers NSW is pleased to see areas of explicit carer inclusion within the Lifetime Care and Support Guidelines 2018. This inclusion is evidenced through provisions such as financial compensation for costs incurred by a carer to attend any clinical examination with the person they care for, recognition of the role of the carer in attending an examination or appointment to provide support, and acceptance of information provided by a carer in relation to their loved one, including their own concerns and needs.

Carers NSW strongly advocates however, that these methods of inclusion are dependent on staff access to carer inclusive training on an ongoing basis. Across a variety of organisations and service sectors, Carers NSW sees carers overlooked as the result of limited carer awareness. Carers NSW believes that carer awareness training should be expanded across the organisation, in order to ensure that carers – whether they be clients or staff members – are better recognised, included and supported. Consideration should also be given to supporting and recruiting icare staff with a lived experience of caring, both in order to support carers with the challenges of the caring role, and to inform the work of icare.

Carers NSW also highlights the use of both the terms 'carer' and 'care worker' within the Guidelines, which denotes a clear distinction between these roles; this is consistent with the legislative definition of 'carer' established by the NSW *Carers (Recognition) Act 2010*. Carers NSW is also pleased to see that respite care services are recognised as facilitating and supporting the primary informal support relationship between the family or carer and the participant. Also that reasonable and necessary aids and appliances increase or maintain the safety of the participant, their family and carer(s).

With regards to the services and supports provided under the scheme, Carers NSW has a number of recommendations to ensure the rights and needs of carers are upheld. Firstly, all treatment,

rehabilitation and care service planning should take into account the individual needs and capacity of family and carers, to ensure that any informal care provided is at the discretion of the carer. One on one support should be available to the participant and their carer when completing required documentation to reduce the risk of exclusion where potential barriers such as low educational and digital literacy, or cultural and linguistic diversity are present.

Clear pathways should be in place to allow for information sharing, with consent, between the scheme and relevant professionals i.e. a general practitioner who will provide a medical certificate or a police officer who provides a report. Carers NSW advocates that claimants, their carers and family be assigned one worker where this is possible to promote consistency and reduce the likelihood of repeating information which may result in re-traumatisation. And finally, complaint pathways and avenues to dispute decisions must be made clear and readily available.

Thank you for accepting our submission.

Yours sincerely,

Elena Katrakis
CEO
Carers NSW