

MEDIA RELEASE

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GRANDPARENT CARERS SEEK ONGOING SUPPORT

Grandparents welcome signals from the NSW State Government acknowledging that kinship carers should be the first choice for children who cannot be raised by their parents. The grandparent carers who attended the 'Grandparents and the Law forum' convened by Council on the Ageing NSW (COTA NSW) last week say they're pleased to be recognised.

"We're happy to see the needs of children being put first," says Ian Day, CEO of COTA NSW. "It's vital that we support these kids. It's also important that we support those who are raising them."

"Many of the children who are being raised by their grandparents experienced very rough starts. Some of these kids have been exposed to significant harm and they have complex needs as a result. The grandparents who attended our forum are seeking assurance that their grandkids will get the support they need, when they need it."

"Often, the needs of children in Out-of-Home-Care, including those living with their grandparents, evolve as they grow up. Many require ongoing assistance to address their physical, psychological and educational needs. The cost of meeting these needs can be extremely high. Unlike other kinship carers, grandparent carers may be out of the paid workforce by the time their grandchildren come into their care. Even if they want to re-enter the workforce to cover the cost of raising grandchildren with additional needs, they may be unable to do so."

"Grandparent carers are prepared to do the hard yards on behalf of their grandchildren. Every time a grandparent steps in to parent a child they are making a contribution that would otherwise be borne by the State."

"Grandparents carers are very resilient and they do a great deal to support each other. Across NSW they've formed their own support networks to help them raise their grandchildren. But they can't raise children with complex needs without some help from the community. They just want to be assured that their grandchildren will be able to get the same support that kids in foster care can get. Equality of access is all grandparent carers are seeking."

END.

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