

From the Carers NSW President



Another year almost gone and once again I'm reflecting on what the past year has meant for carers and for Carers NSW. And what an interesting year this has been! For me, one highlight was the passing of the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 with its commitment to greater government and

community support for carers through the Carers Charter, the Carers Advisory Council and carer assessments.

As I write the selection process for the Carers Advisory Council is in progress and we wish for all those selected the courage and wisdom that will make this Council a real force for change for carers in NSW.

I reflect on the courage of all carers who care amidst great adversity. I reflect on carers who continue to advocate for other carers, whether in their local area or in the state or national arena. Those wonderful feisty ladies of the Carers Alliance political party and Australians Mad as Hell come to mind – they are an inspiration to us all. So too are the carers who set up and run carer support groups, or who are available on the telephone to other carers who need someone to share a crisis with, and of course the wonderful Carers NSW carer representatives who advocate at a local and state level for all of us.

Of course while much has changed, much stays the same.

I reflect on the letters I have received from carers during the year that tell of ongoing financial despair, little or no access to appropriate services, including respite, and the lack of supported accommodation that leaves carers of children with profound disabilities struggling to care 24 hours a day seven days a week. The letters and conversations that express the fear of *'what will happen after I can no longer care'* haunt me. So there is still much for us, at Carers NSW, to do. We are busy planning our direction and strategies for next year and further into the

future as we strive, as always, to stay relevant and up-to-date in our work with, and for, carers. While much has changed within Carers NSW, with some programs having ended because funding has stopped, new programs are being implemented and new research is in the pipeline. We are reaching a broader range of carers than ever before. Our future as an organisation has never looked brighter.

Lastly I reflect on all our supporters: our members, carers across the state, community people, government agencies, businesses large and small and professional people in all sectors. I think especially of our staff and volunteers. Thank you all for what you have done over the past year. I wish you all a very happy and peaceful time over Christmas and the New Year and look forward to working and talking with you again next year.

Laraine Toms, President

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