



Hon Phil Reeves MP
Member for Mansfield

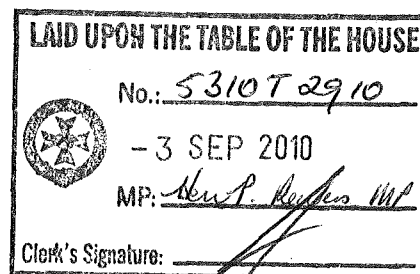
Your reference: Petition 1489-10
Our reference: COM 11861-2010



Minister for Child Safety
and Minister for Sport

2 SEP 2010

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000



~~NEIL~~
Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to Petition No. 1489-10 received by the Legislative Assembly on 3 August 2010 seeking amendments to legislation in the matter of grandparents raising grandchildren.

The Government acknowledges the selfless and invaluable contribution made by grandparents raising their grandchildren, especially by providing their grandchildren with stability and continuity of care. The Carers (Recognition) Amendment Bill 2010 was recently introduced into the Queensland Parliament to recognise the contribution of grandparents providing full-time care for their grandchildren. The Bill provides a legislative framework for the consideration of the needs and interests of these grandparents and grandchildren in Government policy, planning and service delivery decisions. The Bill will also align the *Carers (Recognition) Act 2008 (Queensland)* with proposed federal legislation.

The Government also recognises that families have the primary responsibility for the upbringing, protection and development of their children (in particular, the petitioners should refer to section 5(2)(b) of the *Child Protection Act 1999*). The State can only intervene when an allegation of harm to a child has been made and when it is substantiated that the child is in need of protection. When such intervention occurs, the State takes on the responsibility of caring for these children and accordingly the legislation establishes an out-of-home care system which provides for the payment of an allowance to an approved carer, including foster and kinship carers—which may include grandparents—for the child's care and maintenance.

The petitioners may care to note that another way the Government provides support for grandparents who are caring for their grandchildren is through the 'Time for Grandparents' program, linking grandparents with free activities so they can access respite while the children are enjoying themselves. More than 600 families were actively involved in the Time for Grandparents respite program during 2009-10. The program also runs camps for 'grandfamilies' where specialist support and training is provided. Thirteen camps were conducted in 2009-10 and over 100 grandparents with 203 grandchildren attended the camps.

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I would also like the petitioners to be aware that in acknowledgement that many grandparents are the primary carers for their grandchildren, the Honourable Anna Bligh MP, Premier and Minister for the Arts recently announced 'Grandparents Day' which will be celebrated in Queensland on the first Sunday in November each year. For this the first year, Queensland grandparents will be honoured with their very own special day on 7 November 2010.

A national first, this is an important opportunity for grandchildren, children and the community to thank grandparents for their love and support.

I can also advise the petitioners that financial support for families in Australia is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government. Family assistance may be provided where grandparents are caring for grandchildren, without the child's parents, regardless of whether the grandparent has legal responsibility for the child. Family Tax Benefits (Parts A and B), Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Tax Rebate may be available to help with the cost of raising the children.

I thank the petitioners for taking the time to raise the important issue of support for grandparents as child carers with the Government.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Reeves'.

Phil Reeves MP
Minister for Child Safety
and Minister for Sport
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