

**AUSTRALIAN FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION**

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
INQUIRY INTO GRANDPARENTS WHO TAKE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR  
RAISING THEIR GRANDCHILDREN**

**Priority areas:**

- 1. Grandparent carers should be able to access supports and services for their grandchildren similar to those accessed by non-relative foster carers.**
- 2. Government to abolish means-testing of grandparent carers when determining a grandchild's access to Centrelink benefits, including fully subsidised child care.** (An example is how foster child Health Care Cards are administered, plus exemption from the Looking for Work component of Welfare to Work etc)
- 3. That Grandparent Carers become a key priority area for Centrelink Social Work Services.** We suggest that there is one **Grandparent Carer Liaison Officer** in each Centrelink and Medicare office to service grandparent and other carer enquiries. These officers should be a central contact point for all grandparent carers, including those from Aboriginal, Torres Strait or other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and this role is overseen by Social Work Services within each Centrelink Zone.

In addition, we suggest that **one Policy Officer per Centrelink Zone** be tasked with the overarching responsibility for carers and their issues, and that this person regularly engages with grandparent and other carers.

- 4. One stop shops for grandparents** to access counselling, support, information on legal & financial matters and referrals to local agencies, combined with a national **24 hour support service and website.**
- 5. Funding for local / culturally appropriate support services** be made available and accessible by all grandparent carers.