

## **COTA SA SUBMISSION RELATING TO:**

### ***Carers Recognition (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2025***

1 August 2025

#### **Submission authorised by**

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COTA SA welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Carers Recognition (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2025. We acknowledge the significant contribution carers make to our community and strongly support legislative improvements that recognise and strengthen support for carers.

#### **About COTA SA**

COTA SA is an older people's movement run by, for and with older people. We represent the rights, interests and futures of around 700,000 older South Australians. Our policy and advocacy work is informed by extensive engagement across metropolitan, regional and remote communities. COTA SA is committed to ensuring older South Australians have the opportunity, capacity and support to navigate the changes of ageing in their place of choice, with dignity, security and purpose.

#### **Why does this Bill matter to older South Australians?**

COTA SA has an interest in people who are affected by this act, both as carers and as those receiving care.

COTA SA has an ongoing survey, *How are you going?*, which helps to identify the issues and areas of concern for older people. Many people refer concerns they have, either in relation to their own caring responsibilities, or the concerns they have about requiring care – both now or into the future.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://survey.zohopublic.com/zs/UKDHoE>

The types of challenges they reference in their answers are broad – they include physical, emotional, practical and financial challenges of caring for – or being cared for by – a partner, parent, child or grandchild as they age. Indeed, COTA continues to advocate for life navigation services to support people through these life changes.<sup>2</sup>

We acknowledge the expertise of Carers SA, as the peak body in this area, and broadly support their submission to the amendment bill. Additionally, we make the following comments, to highlight the particular circumstances of older people.

### Discussion about broadening definitions

COTA SA broadly supports the objectives of the proposed amendments, particularly the clearer definitions and broader recognition of carers, which now include a more diverse range of caring scenarios. In particular, we welcome the explicit mention of dementia within the proposed amendment, as dementia-friendly policies and communities are essential to realising the state's goals articulated in South Australian's Plan for Ageing Well 2022-2025<sup>3</sup>.

We support Carers SA's recommendation that a definition of 'medical condition' include conditions that may be temporary, but require intensive supports.

COTA SA endorses the broadening of the definition of a "care relationship," recognising the complexity and diversity of caring roles and relationships.

We concur with Carers SA's assertion that frailty is not an inevitability of ageing, and we support their recommendation for retaining a definition that aligns with the care relationship, of *'a person who, because of frailty, requires assistance with the carrying out of everyday tasks.'*

Further, we support the calls of Grandcarers SA to include informal kinship carers within the definition. Older South Australians who are undertaking these informal care roles are often doing so in difficult circumstances and at significant personal and financial cost, without avenues for additional supports.<sup>4</sup> *The Carers Recognition Act 2005- South Australia, Review of Act 2023/2024 Report – Proposals for legislative change* prepared by Richard Dennis AM PSM recommended the inclusion of this category, and it is disappointing that this was not included<sup>5</sup>.

The Dennis Report also recommended that carers be recognised even if the care recipient has moved into a residential facility, and we feel that this should be made explicit in the Amendment.<sup>6</sup> With such a move, only the physical acts of personal care may alter, but the administrative, advocacy, wellbeing and welfare responsibilities remain regardless of place of residence, and these should continue to be acknowledged as care.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://cotasa.org.au/assets/volumes/downloads/Submissions/COTA-SA-Public-State-Budget-Submission-2025-26-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://dhs.sa.gov.au/how-we-help/ageing-well/ageing-well-strategy-for-south-australians/south-australias-plan-for-ageing-well>

<sup>4</sup> <https://grandcarers.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/UTF-8Hansard-3-April-2025-Grandcarers-SA.pdf> p20

<sup>5</sup> [https://dhs.sa.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/169835/Carers-Recognition-Act-Final-Report.pdf](https://dhs.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/169835/Carers-Recognition-Act-Final-Report.pdf) p 15

<sup>6</sup> Ibid p 15

### Updates to the South Australian Carers Charter

The emphasis on ensuring carers' needs are recognised and supported in the Carers Charter, especially regarding their significant economic and social contributions, aligns strongly with COTA SA's policy positions.

COTA SA also welcomes the specific inclusion of carers from diverse backgrounds, such as older carers, LGBTI+ communities, culturally and linguistically diverse carers, and carers with disabilities. This reflects an intersectional approach advocated for by COTA SA.

### Summary of recommendations:

- COTA SA recommends temporary conditions are noted within the definition of 'medical condition', and that the accompanying caring responsibilities are acknowledged
- We support Carers SA's recommendation regarding the definition of frailty, as *'a person who, because of frailty, requires assistance with the carrying out of everyday tasks'*.
- COTA SA supports calls by Grandcarers SA for the explicit recognition and inclusion of informal kinship carers under the amended Act, to ensure they receive necessary supports, given their vital role and the significant challenges they face.
- We join with Grandcarers SA in recommending the explicit recognition of trauma within care relationships, acknowledging its significant impact and ensuring access to necessary supports for carers managing trauma-related care responsibilities.
- We urge for the explicit inclusion of carers, even after the care recipient has moved in to a residential facility, where the caring role continues.

COTA SA appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this legislative review and looks forward to ongoing collaboration to ensure the effective recognition and support of all carers in South Australia.

### For further information

COTA SA looks forward to continuing to contribute to discussions on Carer recognition Please contact Miranda Starke, Chief Executive, in the first instance.

### Acknowledgement of Country

*COTA SA acknowledges and respects Aboriginal people as the Traditional Custodians of the land of South Australia. We honour Aboriginal peoples' continuing connection to Country and recognise that their sovereignty was never ceded. We pay our respects to First Nations Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal people.*