

CARERS ADVISORY COUNCIL — COMPLIANCE REPORT

Statement by Minister for the Environment

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for the Environment) [12.03 pm]: On behalf of the Minister for Communities, I present to members of the Legislative Assembly the 2007 compliance report of the Carers Advisory Council. The Carers Advisory Council must report on the performance of WA Health and the Disability Services Commission in meeting the obligations set out in the Carers Recognition Act 2004. This legislation was enacted to effect a cultural change among the service providers that operate within Western Australia's public health and disability sectors by ensuring that carers are included and considered in the decision-making processes that affect service provision where it impacts on the caring role.

In this its second year of reporting to the minister, the council reports that this third year of the act's implementation has seen development and improvement in strategies and approaches that recognise and involve carers. The council reports that strategically, both WA Health and the Disability Services Commission are complying with the intent of the legislation and its first objective of recognising carers. With respect to compliance with the Carers Charter, the council reports that the Disability Services Commission has complied, while WA Health is working towards compliance. Although these two reporting organisations complied with the requirements of the act in 2007, it is clear that substantial work still remains to be done in this area. Among service provider staff, there is still a need for stronger knowledge and understanding of why and how the legislation is applied. We must also work to ensure that carers themselves have knowledge of the Carers Recognition Act and the Carers Charter, and the implications of both in supporting the valuable contribution carers make to our society. Importantly, the council recommends that service providers be encouraged to consider the benefits of engaging with carers so that best practice measures based on the experiences of carers themselves can be developed and implemented.

The findings of this report are relevant, timely and crucial to both improving the quality of service provision by the Disability Services Commission and WA Health, and gradually improving the lives of the 248 000 people in Western Australia who are selflessly and tirelessly committed to the caring role. I table the report.

[See paper No 3885.]