

Social Services Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill 2015

This submission raises the concern members of Grandparents Rearing Grandchildren WA Inc. have regarding the proposed changes to current Family Tax Benefits. Grandparents Rearing Grandchildren WA Inc. represents a current membership of over 90 Grandcarers and over 110 grandchildren ranging from 6 months to over 18 years old. The average age of our membership is greater than 65, including several great grandparents, the eldest of which is 86 years old. Our support group does not receive any Federal or State funding to run the social, education/training programs or retreats it provides for the membership.

We acknowledge that some minor changes have positively assisted in supporting Grandcarers with sole responsibility for their grandchildren following the *2014 Senate Enquiry into Grandparents who take Primary Responsibility for Raising their Grandchildren* (see attached submission). However there is still no unique identity for our increasing group of aging Grandcarers.

From what we understand of the Social Services Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill 2015, we as grandparents with sole parental responsibility for our grandchildren will be struggling, even more financially, with the changes proposed by this bill.

It appears from the proposed amendments we will eventually receive nothing other than our pension or superannuation (a finite income) to house, feed, cloth, educate and provide social and medical care for our grandchildren.

Many of our members have already remortgaged their homes, used their superannuation or savings in the initial effort to provide a safe, stable, secure and caring environment for their grandchildren. These costs have included legal and court fees, and relocating their grandchildren. Having exhausted their retirement income they have no other income other than the pension and family tax benefits. Grandcarers rely on the Family Tax Benefit supplements when the annual reconciliation is made for many of their grandchildren's school and out of school activities.

We have been informed that out of all children In Care, over 50% are in kinship care which further illustrates the extent of kinship care in the community and the amount of money these carers are saving the Government.

With sole parental responsibility for our grandchildren, we are anxious to know what financial support will replace the Family Tax Benefits that provide us with the continuing ability to provide a safe, stable, secure and caring environment for our grandchildren.

Yours sincerely,

Kaye Bendle

Vice President

On behalf of all our members of Grandparents Rearing Grandchildren WA Inc.

(Att.)