

# MONTHLY NEWS



## Editorial

Hi Everyone,

Winter is definitely here and it looks like being a cold one. Remember if you need blankets, warm clothes or the like there are always people to help so give me call.

I am going on holiday from the 29<sup>th</sup> May until the 29<sup>th</sup> June (This covers much of the time I would normally be spending on the June and July newsletters.) I have had an offer of help with one newsletter so hopefully there will only be one missing.

People on the mailout list will receive theirs as usual, but I will just send a reminder notice to those on email so they will know when to look for it on our website.

April was another busy month and reports on the OPSO Speakout and my visit with the Hon. Margaret Keech MP, Minister for Child Safety follow.

Our Marjie has also sent in a report from the COTA NSW conference where she represented us. It makes very interesting reading.

Being represented at these conferences is so important in raising awareness. Thanks Marjie.

On May 10<sup>th</sup>, 10:30am-1:30pm, there will be a **free Family Fun Day** organized by the Beenleigh Area Family Support Network @ Doug Larson Pk., Logan Rd Beenleigh (Duck Park to many, where we had our picnics.)

Bring the kids and enjoy a sausage sizzle, face painting and much more. It's all free!

Hope you enjoy this edition,

My love,,

Maree



Linking seniors with community information

&

## Grandparents Information

While I am away in June the SEL will be launching the book they and Dr Sally Frye et al have been working on for so long.

It promises to be a wonderful resource for relative carers so look for your copy.

## The Hon. Margaret Keech MP

### Minister for Child Safety.

This month KinKare was privileged to meet with Margaret Keech MP Minister for Child Safety and member for Albert. Margaret is our local member and has been a supporter of KinKare since we first began.

We spoke on several topics and seemed to find common ground on all of them. I know that she does in fact follow through and I am therefore optimistic of the best possible outcomes.



I asked if it would be possible for the Dept.s of Communities and Child Safety to work together to allow the **Time for Grandparents Programme**, and in particular grand camps, become accessible to grandparents through the Dept. Margaret seemed to think there was a possibility of this.

We also spoke about kinship carers being given guardianship which ties in with her policy of **One Chance at Childhood**. Her stance was that she is in favour of passing on **guardianship** after reasonable efforts to rebuild the family fail, but would not want to see services or financial support withdrawn.

**Grievance procedures** were also mentioned and for the first time I felt someone other than us could see the sense in introducing some objectivity to the system.

**The crux of reform is the staff in the Department.** We both agreed the conditions under which they work and their morale is equally as important as their training and expertise in order to improve outcomes for our children.

A Minister capable of this kind of open and frank dialogue and the ability to empathise with both workers and clients is surely our best chance yet of introducing common sense approaches.



## MEETING DATES

*Please call first as many groups do not meet in school holidays*

### KinKare EAGLEBY

Meets the second Friday of each month @10:30am,  
Eagleby Community Centre  
Ph Maree 3287 1664

### KinKare NERANG

Meets the fourth Wednesday of the month @12:30pm  
Nerang Neighbourhood Ctr  
Ph Maree 3287 1664

### SUNSHINE COAST KinKare

This group has now decided to hold joint meetings with  
Community Solutions.  
Please see below

### KinKare INALA

Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month @ 10:30am  
We are trying to get this meeting happening again so  
please let us know if you are planning to attend. It is  
quite expensive for me to go only to find no-one there.  
Ph Maree 3287 1664.

### KinKare GLADSTONE

Please contact Pauline  
Ph (07) 4978 0501

### KinKare WARWICK

**Currently needing a facilitator.  
Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.**

### ZILLMERE & SOUTHBANK

Indigenous Grandparent Support  
Group

Meets twice monthly  
Please ring Tess Ph 3252 4371

### Grandparents As Parents

Community Solutions Inc.  
Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

Please phone Sharon 5437 9499

### CAIRNS & DISTRICT

#### G'parents Support Group

Meets the first Wednesday of each month @9:30am,  
Hambledon House Community Centre, Edmonton  
Ph Janet or John (07) 40 555 161  
Email [johnjan@cairns.net.au](mailto:johnjan@cairns.net.au)

### TOWNSVILLE region

#### Nth Q'ld G'parents in Need of Support (GINOS)

For details of this group, please contact  
Ph. Nev (07) 4723 3520  
Email [trcota@bigpond.net.au](mailto:trcota@bigpond.net.au)

**Please Note: Updated phone number**



### Group Meetings

For those who would like their meetings placed in this  
column, just drop me an email or letter and I would be  
only too pleased to spread the word.

**There is no requirement to be a KinKare group.**



### Newsletter Items

Just another reminder to all groups, the **newsletter  
articles are for distribution** to any relative carers.  
Don't hesitate to pass on the newsletter in its entirety or  
relevant articles as you see fit.

The only thing we ask is that the intent/content of the  
article is not compromised.



### Please Note

All contributions to the newsletter  
are gratefully accepted.

Please email them to me for transfer to the newsletter.

If you need someone to chat to, we  
are always happy to hear from you.

Phone Danni 3299 1764

or Maree 3287 1664, or your local  
support group leader.





## OPSO Speakout Report

**Some current Legal Matters:**

**Affidavits** need to be spot on.

This is the crux of your case in court and **you must get this absolutely right**. This needs legal advice as well as a well kept diary of events. Free legal advice is available through the network of Community Legal Centres. Be aware that legal practioners specialise in different areas of the law and VERY few are up to date on grandparent issues.

Question your **lawyer's background and experience** of residency cases for grandparents and their outcomes.

**Two grandparents** stand a better chance of residency than a single grandparent.

**Health and fitness** is more important than **age**.

Try to have orders include encouraging the grandchildren to write **thankyou notes for gifts and cards** as this means you and the children will know where they came from and where they went. (It's tough to say no to the giving of thanks!)

**Some current Legal Problems Identified:**

The quality and reliability of **family reports** has long been in question. Some psychologists maintaining that they need to be standardised sp that individual assessors would at least produce similar findings.

**Family Relationship Centres** need to have their role redefined to include matters of a legal nature.

Child Protection Agencies and Children's **Courts need to allow access for grandparents**.

**Other Issues – sociological:**

The attitude that **children are best placed with the parents** by all levels of "officialdom" **MUST** be reformed to take the capability and situation of parents into account for the sake of the children.

**Children have a right to a relationship with their grandparents**. The research into possible emotional harm to the child deprived of grandparents and extended family in all cultures was noted.

The **whole community** needs to be recognising and acting within the Family Law Act in order to underpin the rights of grandchildren and grandparents to have a relationship. It must be seen as the **abuse** it is to use grandchildren to **blackmail grandparents** or gain access to their assets.

**Ideas for a Possible Solution:**

Given the diversity of the issues and the apparent range of issues outside the immediate area of law but impacting on it, it was decided to set up a working party of some key individuals to progress these matters further and to bring back a report to the second speakout for grandparents to be held in July.

**Representatives** from: **Family Relationship Centre** Mt Gravatt; **OPSO**; a practising private **Solicitor**; a Doctor of Law who has experienced the Courts from a **grandparent** perspective; **KinKare**; **Council of Grandparents** are to be included in the working party.

A second tier of interested parties who will be involved from time to time are: Office of Seniors; Caxton Legal Centre; Seniors Enquiry Line; Old Law Society – Elder Committee; Griffith University.

## Conference Report

By **Marjie Graham**  
KinKare Delegate

Over 500 grandparent carers and those denied contact, gathered in Sydney in conjunction with Seniors Week for a two day conference organised by COTA - NSW.

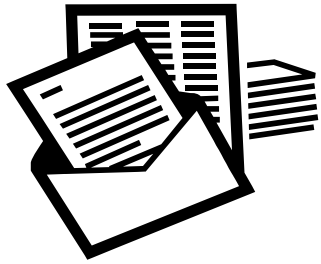


Many grandparents find themselves having to care for their grandchildren on a permanent basis because of the growing incidence of divorce, drug or alcohol addiction or their children's financial situations. The stress of this on grandparents can be an enormous drain on their health and finances. Grandparents find themselves having to use money they have saved for their retirement to meet the cost of schooling, clothes, housing and legal costs. Grandparents find themselves going back to work or taking out a loan.

Grandparents denied contact have the same drain on their finances. They also may have legal costs. They don't get Legal Aid if they own their home or have superannuation to fund their retirement. It is very hard to find a way to replace this money if it is used. Many grandparents don't have the skills or the health to return to work and why should they.

Grandparents as carers love their grandchildren and are very reluctant to ask for help. It is up to those of us in the community to be aware of their contribution to the welfare of their kin.

Grandparents, denied contact, grieve and resolve to continue, whether through the courts or mediation, the ongoing fight for their grandchildren's right to know and love them.



## Our Personal Page

Many thanks go to all of you for your contributions to the newsletter.

During the last month or so, many service providers have mentioned to me that they are just now experiencing grandparents as clients. It has taken years, but I believe that the work is starting to pay off.

Yet another major seminar for grandparents is being organized for August which will have a slightly different focus from those already run as there will be more service providers there wanting to know how to help.

Please keep watching for details and support these activities as they come up because this is how we spread the word.



## Laughter is the Best Medicine!

### Married For 40 Years



After being married for 40 years, I took a careful look at my wife one day and said, 'Honey, 40 years ago we had a cheap apartment, a cheap car, slept on a sofa bed and watched a 10-inch black and white TV, but I got to sleep every night with a hot 21-year-old gal.'

Now I have a \$500,000.00 home, a \$45,000.00 car, a nice big bed and a plasma screen TV, but I'm sleeping with a 61-year-old woman. It seems to me that you're not holding up your side of things.'

My wife is a very reasonable woman. She told me to go out and find a hot 21-year-old gal, and she would make sure that I would once again be living in a cheap apartment, driving a cheap car, sleeping on a sofa bed and watching a 10-inch black and white TV.

**Aren't older women great? They really know how to solve your mid-life crisis**



## Food for Thought?

I was walking down the street when I was accosted by a particularly dirty and shabby-looking homeless woman who asked me for a couple of dollars for dinner.

I took out my wallet, got out ten dollars and asked, 'If I give you this money, will you buy wine with it instead of dinner?' 'No, I had to stop drinking years ago', the homeless woman told me.

'Will you use it to go shopping instead of buying food?' I asked.

'No, I don't waste time shopping,' the homeless woman said. 'I need to spend all my time trying to stay alive.'

'Will you spend this on a beauty salon instead of food?' I asked.

'Are you NUTS!' replied the homeless woman. I haven't had my hair done in 20 years!

'Well, I said, 'I'm not going to give you the money. Instead, I'm going to take you out for dinner with my husband and me tonight.'

The homeless woman was shocked. 'Won't your husband be furious with you for doing that? I know I'm dirty, and I probably smell pretty disgusting.'

I said, 'That's okay. It's important for him to see what a woman looks like after she has given up shopping, hair appointments, and wine.'



## GOVERNMENT HEALTH WARNING

**DO NOT SWALLOW CHEWING-GUM !!**

