



May 2025 Newsletter

Kin Raising Kids Tasmania
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Kin Raising Kids (KRK) Tasmania Progress – April 2025.

KRK made the decision in 2024 to pursue and develop links with other National Groups and stakeholders that shared their passion and vision to develop a Nationally Coordinated platform that would sit over Child Safety in all states. There is a need to develop 'unity' in the states and territories about Kin carer supports and assistance, but this is no easy task. For this to happen there will need to be some changes to the law relating to the Commonwealth Family Law Act and the Children's, Youth, and their Families Act (1996). KRK are the leading Tasmanian Kinship Advocacy group in raising awareness and driving kincarers issues and seeking resolutions. That objective led to a great deal of work in 2024.

In October 2023 John Flack as KRK Secretary and Tracey Flack, Board member, participated in a meeting with the Federal Parliamentary Friends of Grandparents (now retitled to include Kinship carers), in Canberra. This was organized by Meredith Kiraly, a respected academic researcher of kinship carer issues in Australia and now Patron of KRK. Sadly, none of the Tasmanian Senators were able to attend that meeting. The 'Parliamentary Friends of Grandparents and Kinship Carers', is a group intended to provide a non-partisan forum for Members of Parliament to meet and interact with Kinship carers.

A number of matters were flagged at the meeting including the invisibility of informal kinship care families. Informal carers feel invisible as they are not recognised as Carers in Commonwealth legislation, and hence, not eligible for carer services.

Informal carers do not have parental rights, although they have a parental role, and hence they are not eligible for parental leave or financial assistance, and often cannot gain the appropriate documentation, such as Birth certificates or Medicare cards, that children and families require for access to many services.

Australian and international research shows that poverty in informal Kinship care families, is the biggest issue for informal kinship carers.

KRK has had a long and positive relationship with Dr Meredith Kiraly. Meredith is a psychologist with over thirty years' experience in child and family welfare with a special interest in kinship care. She is an Honorary Research Fellow in the University of Melbourne Social Work Department and has a small consultancy in human services. Her numerous research projects and consultancies have covered a range of human service areas with a focus on vulnerable children and families and out of home care. Since 2009 Meredith has specialised in kinship care research and advocacy. Current commitments include advocacy for recognition and support of kinship care arrangements including all carer-child relationships both informal and formal.

Meredith was the guest speaker at our AGM in 2024 and returned again in 2025. And, if this wasn't exciting enough, she agreed to be 'Our KRK Patron', taking over from Mark Morrissey who now resides in WA. Our work with Meredith led us to the newly formed Kinship Alliance Australia.

The mission of the Kinship Alliance is to raise awareness, advocate for policy changes that recognise and address the needs of all kinship carers and the children in their care. State/territory matters specific to formal kinship care are beyond the remit of Kinship Alliance Australia.

Find out more with the link www.kinshipalliance.org.au

KKR has also been keeping busy on the Island! Meeting with politicians, attending forums and meetings and participating in the Community Kinship Governance Group. The group consists of representatives from Child Safety, Baptcare, Mission Australia, FKAT & Kin Raising Kids and meets regularly to advise on concerns, needs and progress of informal kinship carers following the state government Informal Kinship Care Review (2021) undertaken by Frank Ogle.

These experiences and the collaborations, contributions, leadership and support of many provide hope of a brighter future for Kinship carers.

President's Report.

I think the hardest job that I have been asked to do was to become a Kin Carer to our beautiful grandson. Not hard in a physical sense, though as one ages the bones get tired more easily, but I found it very emotionally draining. Some friends drop away, and life goes in different directions. Our darling boy was only 5 days old when he came to us and this year, we celebrate 10 years with this beautiful soul. I have learned a lot about bikes, scooters, pump tracks, skate parks and surf carnivals. At a push I can even put the bike rack onto the car! Wouldn't change a thing.



We all know that these children come with their own challenges, be it trauma, ADHA, anxiety or just fearing what is going to happen next. The best part of the day is when he tells me that he loves me, though that has probably come after some words that I didn't want to hear!

Deep down they do love what you do for them and thankyou from Kin Raising Kids for the job that you do. Kind regards, Jan, KRK President.

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Discussions with Politicians.

Minister Roger Jaensch.

Kin Raising Kids representatives have met with the Minister at his Burnie office, and left him with the following:

- Is there ongoing funding for the Community Kinship Governance Group and what would that co-design look like?
- With respect to the Frank Ogle Review recommendations, Was the NW pilot model moulded into the Community Kinship Governance Group?
- Reference to the Carers Action Plan, Is the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DEPAC) still doing this plan? What is happening with it remembering its completion date is 2025? In particular: 1.6: Recognition. *Recommence and expand community education and awareness-raising of Informal Kinship Care and support.*
2.6: Access and Participation. *Implement improved Supports for Informal Kinship Carers, utilising co-design.*
- Global Carers Week proposed for October 2025, could we promote the completed Carers Action Plan in conjunction with Kinship Alliance Australia (KAA) and National Global Week?

We still believe the Minister has a real passion for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and remains committed in State Parliament.

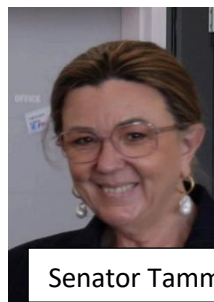
Mike Gaffney MLC.

Representatives, including our President Jan Savage, also had an audience with Mike Gaffney in Devonport, late in February.

This discussion focused on the current status of implementation of recommendations from the Frank Ogle review into Informal Kinship Care, 2021.

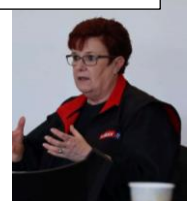
From a reliable resource KRK have since been advised that during the changes in disbanding of the previous Dept. of Communities into DEPAC, DECYP and to a lesser extent other Groups, work on the 'Review' recommendations has been basically delayed, but are deemed as ongoing and will progress as resources become available. At least the progress has not been 'shelved'.

KRK thanks Mike Gaffney for his involvement.



Senator Tammy Tyrrell

Senator Anne Urquhart



Senator Tammy Tyrrell.

KRK have been working closely with Senator Tammy Tyrrell in particular, Anne Urquhart and a number of other federal politicians, Kinship Alliance Australia members, and in affiliation with organisations such as TasCOSS, Carers Tasmania and Care2Serve, Association of Children with Disabilities (ACD) Tas., Mission Australia, Baptcare and Family Based Care (FBC) Tas. We are encouraged by Senator Tyrrell's proposal to present a *Kinship Care 2025 Bill* as an Independent Member to Parliament.



ROSS HENDERSON and Kin Raising Kids (Tas.)

VALE – Ross Henderson

Following the passing of Ross on the 15th December 2024.

- by Frank Tyers

The first time I encountered Ross Henderson was at a meeting of the then Government Advisory Committee (GAC) back in 2010.

This GAC Group was made up of representation from each of the Tasmanian Regions (South, North and North/West) to advise government on needs and supports for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) around Tasmania.

The meetings were chaired by the late John Ward who was one of three delegates from South, I had been nominated as one of the delegates for the North at that time and Ross Henderson, Kath Milburn and Wendy Roberts were those nominated to represent the North/West region. The GAC concept was developed following the 2003 government inquiry into GRG.

An article published October 25, 2010 in the Advocate newspaper depicted the groups frustration carers were experiencing, and included:

"It's about time the government honoured the recommendation from the 2003 inquiry. "They said in the first five of the 28 recommendation to give grandparents raising grandchildren equal financial support with foster carers. "It is discrimination, there is nothing else to call it." Ms Milburn isn't alone. When she first began caring for her grandchildren she searched for a support network. Upon finding nothing, Ms Milburn created 'Save Our Sanity' for other grandparents in a similar situation along the Coast for social support.

'Save our Sanity' was starting to strengthen, meeting regularly at individual's homes on a completely voluntary basis. On the 20th June 2011 Ross and his extended family featured on Today Tonight, an Australian current affairs television program produced by the Seven Network. The link to this program is: <https://youtu.be/9GnL04XuUk8?si=EMF7FtN4eLV2bylk> Titled 'Incredible Grandparent' and broadcast: 20 June 2011 on Today Tonight.

This show depicts one of the massive advantages for those in kinship care as compared to foster care. These kids are able to acquire many more life skills and further schooling.

By the end of 2012, the Uniting Church, having obtained a small grant from the Tasmanian Government, had become very supportive of grandparents raising grandchildren acknowledging the inequity of carers that existed right around the State. Support groups were trying to establish in all three regions; however it was apparent the NW stood above the South and the North.

Thanks to the efforts of Ross and Judy Henderson, Wendy and Derrick Roberts and my wife and I, having shifted back to the NW Coast, a new group was created calling themselves Grandparents Raising Grandchildren – Northwest (GRG-NW).

Some of the Uniting Grant money was used to employ a part time coordinator, Christine Jeffries. This Tasmanian Government funding was relatively short lived; however, it was temporally supplemented with funding made available from the Federal Government through Syd Sidebottom. When this funding dried up the Uniting Churches along the NW Coast rallied together to continue to support the retention of GRG-NW, in whatever way they could, as they still do today. Christine relinquished her role some eight years ago and Debbie Emmett has excelled in the coordinator role of GRG-NW since.

Many of the Save our Sanity Group on the coast have since passed on.

Ross, utilising his advocating skills gained over a lifetime of lobbying, parliamentarians particularly, helped instigate a very detailed submission in 2014 to the Senate Inquiry into Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. Several submissions, private and otherwise were presented from Tasmania's NW Coast, but GRG-NW were invited to expand more specifically to a panel of Senators to directly promote their concerns. This was a massive achievement and a real credit Ross' ability.

Even though a few of the recommendations from this Senate Inquiry were considered Federally, many were handballed back to the States for consideration and implementation, in the main they have been overlooked and not acted on. This being consistent with the previous 2003 State Inquiry.

The Formation of Kin Raising Kids Tasmania Inc.

The grandparents raising grandchildren were becoming increasingly frustrated with the lack of action particularly from the State Government.

One small windfall presented by Labor Minister, Lyn Thorpe, was where recognition as a carer could be acknowledged if endorsed by a DHHS Regional Manager.

This was very short lived when a change of government put a stop to this initiative.

The GAC Group concept had fallen over due to ageing of participants (John Ward, a significant driver, was just burnt-out and unwell), many no longer caring and the government representatives of various departments were disinterested or had career path changes and no longer available. GRG no longer had a State based support group. Each of the Regional Support Groups for Grandparent Carers were either fading away or not able to lobby parliamentarians because their coordinators were employed and bound by company ethics.

In 2017 a group of grandparent carers, initially calling themselves 'Kincarers', but having to change this to 'Kin Raising Kids' Tasmania (KRK), evolved out of GRG-NW, to lobby, advocate and represent where practical, all Grandparent, Kinship and Kith Carers, both formal and informal, from all around Tasmania.

The original committee was:

Ross Henderson – President.

Frank Tyers – Secretary.

Judy Henderson – Treasurer.

Tony Walters – Vice President.

Wendy Roberts – Publicity Officer.

Lee Courto – Committee.

Garry Love – Committee.

John Ward - Committee.

Derrick Roberts - Committee.

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Under the leadership of Ross, KRK was soon established as a representative group for kinship carers in Tasmania. Meeting with politicians, both State and Federal and other like-minded organisations, but never losing sight of its grass roots, those many carers doing it tough. Ross was one of the first to hold up his hand to be included in appointments and meetings.

KRK celebrated its registration with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission and the Australian Taxation Office as a Not-for-Profit Organisation or Charity. This has opened many doors not the least of business houses being able to sponsor or donate. Also welcomed as it assists with the endeavours to put pressure on politicians to recognise grandparent and other kinship carers.

Even after Ross had served his time as president, he remained on the Committee right up to the recent AGM held in October 2024, where he was nominated and became KRK's first Life Member.

It is with sadness we say farewell, Ross Henderson, a founding member, inaugural president and an inspirational leader to our Organisation – Kid Raising Kids Tasmania Inc.

Ross Henderson passed away on the 15th December 2024. Thank you, Ross.

National Foster and Kinship Care Conference

Will this year be held in Sydney from the

28th – 30th November 2025

This is a fantastic opportunity to network with other carers
from different States and Territories.

Current KRK members can apply for limited assistance to attend.

KRK are extremely grateful for any donations received as we rely on this type of contribution to exist. We are not dependant on any government contributions.

As a result of this financial support given to Kin Raising Kids, we have been able to provide some back to Kinship Carers in their time of need.

A welcomed initiative.

Training:

**FOSTER AND KINSHIP CARERS
ASSOCIATION TASMANIA PRESENT**

**TRAINING WITH DR
JULIAN WATCHORN**

Training will begin at 10:00am and conclude
at 12:00noon.

Private consultation begins at 12:30pm and
concludes at 2:00pm

**NORTH - WEST**
Wednesday 16th July.
10AM-12noon.
Updated Trauma Informed Care training.
Community Helath Centre,
Steele St, Devonport.**SOUTH**
Friday 25th July.
10AM-12noon.
Updated Trauma Informed Care training.
Boyd Crt, Claremont.**NORTH**
Thursday 31st July
10am-12noon
Updated Trauma informed care training.
Door of Hope Launceston.**Baptcare Grandparents
group.**
Friday 1st August
10am-12noon.
Updated Trauma informed care.
Ravenswood primary School.**We look forward to seeing you all there.****PRIVATE
CONSULTS**

Julian will be available for
private consult following
training for carers to chat
through personal matters
including care concerns.
12:30pm-2:00pm
Put the dates in your diary
now!

To RSVP and for more
information email
ceo@fkat.org.au

Kinship Alliance Australia.



Extracts from their latest newsletter

Statutory Declaration for Informal Kinship Carers

Informal grandparent and other kinship carers often struggle to have their 24/7 care role recognised when it matters most - in the day to day of care, such as authorising children's medical treatment, obtaining Medicare cards and birth certificates. At the request of the Alliance, the *Parliamentary Friends of Grandparent & Kinship Carers* have written to the Attorney-General requesting the commissioning of a Commonwealth Statutory Declaration template for Informal grandparent/kinship carers based upon the existing Statutory Declarations in three Australian States.

Kinship Alliance Australia also sent a letter of support to the Attorney-General. Advocacy for this important initiative will continue into the 48th Parliament.

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Planning for a Helpline



In late 2024, the decision was taken to add another Objective for Kinship Alliance Australia, that is, to establish an *Information, Advice and Support* Helpline, together with the provision on the website of information about where to seek help. Establishment of the Helpline is entirely dependent on gaining a specific grant to engage a social worker experienced in the complex field of kinship care. In the meantime, the development of fact sheets and other information for the website will continue.



Kinship Alliance and Indigenous Australia



The Northern Territory is the only Australian jurisdiction not yet represented in the Alliance. We were delighted to receive news this month about a NED Foundation grant to visit the NT to sit down with community leaders and learn how we can best engage with Aboriginal kinship families and services.



The unique culture of Torres Strait Islander (TSI) communities is often overlooked in discussion about Indigenous Australia. In 2021 the Queensland Parliament passed ground-breaking legislation recognising TSI child rearing practice, in which children may be transferred permanently between relatives for cultural reasons. The NED Foundation grant also provides for an Alliance representative to visit Torres Strait Islander communities in the islands and mainland of Queensland to engage with community leaders and learn about any synergy between TSI cultural child rearing practice and the notion of kinship care as defined by the UN and the Australian Institute of Health & Welfare.

Kin Raising Kids Tasmania Incorporated.



If you aren't yet a Supporter or Member of Kin Raising Kids Tasmania, please consider joining by contacting admin@kin4kids.org.au Encourage anyone you know who has an interest in this work to visit our website: kin4kids.org.au and make contact with Jan or John.