



# FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR GRANDPARENTS WHO ARE FULL-TIME CARERS OF THEIR GRANDCHILDREN

## Overview

South Australia is home to approximately 2,500 children who are being raised full-time by their grandparents. These grandparents have stepped up during times of crisis — often due to parental drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, domestic violence, incarceration, or abuse and neglect — to provide safe, stable and loving homes for their grandchildren.

Without these dedicated carers, children would otherwise enter the state’s child protection system; a system already under significant pressure, both financially and operationally.

This proposal seeks a modest \$3 million annual investment from the South Australian Government to provide direct financial support to these unrecognised carers, ensuring better outcomes for children and delivering long-term cost savings for the state.

## The Opportunity

This initiative presents the South Australian Government with a unique opportunity to:

- Support vulnerable children to remain in stable, family-based care.
- Recognise and support grandparent carers, many of whom are living below the poverty line and sacrificing their own financial security.
- Deliver significant cost savings by reducing the reliance on the formal child protection and out-of-home care systems.

## The Financial Ask

We propose the establishment of a Grandparent Carer Support Payment of \$1,000 per child, per year, to be paid to around 1,200 grandparents providing full-time care to their grandchildren. Estimated Annual Cost:

- Direct payments: \$2.5 million (2,500\* children x \$1,000)
- Payment administration by Department of Child Protection: \$100,000
- Applicant support and verification by Grandcarers SA: \$400,000

**Total Annual Commitment: \$3 million**

## Why This Matters

Grandparent carers are saving the state millions each year by keeping children out of state care. According to the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, as of the 2023-24 financial year the South Australian’s government’s real recurrent expenditure per child in out-of-home care was approximately \$120,823 annually. Supporting just 25 children to stay with grandparents offsets the entire cost of this program.



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The social and emotional benefits for children remaining with family are significant. Research shows improved stability, better educational outcomes, and long-term wellbeing when children remain in kinship care.

Grandparent carers are doing it tough. Many have used up their superannuation and rely solely on the aged pension. This support payment acknowledges their critical role and eases financial pressure.

### **A Policy with Heart and Impact**

This initiative aligns with the South Australian Government's aim to build a fairer, more inclusive, and prosperous South Australia. It offers a powerful opportunity for the government to promote:

- **Fairness and Equality:** Ensuring that every South Australian has access to quality education, healthcare, and opportunities to succeed, regardless of their background.
- **Social Justice:** Advocating for the rights of workers, supporting vulnerable communities, and promoting policies that reduce inequality.
- **Community and Family Support:** Recognizing the importance of strong families and communities in building a cohesive and supportive society.

### **Conclusion**

A \$3 million annual investment will provide targeted, meaningful support to grandparent carers, benefiting over 2,500 South Australian children, and strengthening families across the state. It's a small cost for a profound impact; socially, emotionally and economically.

We invite the South Australian Government to seize this opportunity and take the lead in recognising and effectively supporting grandparent carers as the critical safety net they are.

Mike Feszczak

CEO, Grandcarers SA

[www.grandcarers.au](http://www.grandcarers.au)