



# Carer Council

## Member Spotlight

### Lorraine Joy | Carer Council Chair

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#### Background

**Lorraine was reappointed as Chair of the Carer Council in December 2026. Lorraine is a metropolitan based foster carer who has served as the Chair since the Council's creation.**

#### What type of care do you provide?

Specialist carer, respite, emergency, short-term, long-term.

#### How did you become a carer?

By choice. I hit a point in my life that I questioned what I really wanted to do. My grandparents were foster carers (very different back then). I kept hearing advertising and followed the path.

#### What are some of your fondest memories of caring?

Some of my most treasured memories are found in the everyday moments — shared laughter, uncontrollable giggles, breakthroughs after hard days, and watching confidence slowly grow.

I feel privileged to support children in discovering their voice, building resilience and believing in themselves. Walking alongside them in their educational journey and celebrating even the smallest milestones is deeply rewarding.

I also value the development of trust with children's birth families. Through honest, respectful and transparent communication, I have seen relationships evolve into strong partnerships. When collaboration replaces conflict, outcomes improve for children — and that is always the goal.

#### From your experience, what are some of the areas that need addressing in child protection?

There are several key areas requiring continued focus and reform:

- Genuine communication and meaningful consultation with carers
- Collaborative planning with key stakeholders
- Improved access to clear, practical information about policies and procedures
- Fair and sustainable carer payments
- Increased and flexible respite options
- A Care Concern process that is fair, transparent and realistic
- Recognition of carer mental health and wellbeing
- Superannuation considerations for long-term carers
- Improved access to relevant, high-quality training and ongoing support

Sustainable reform requires systems that value carers as professional partners in care, not just placement options.

### **What skills and experience do you bring to your role as Chair of the Carer Council?**

I bring over a decade of lived experience as a Therapeutic Foster Carer, having provided long-term, short-term, emergency and respite care. This has given me a deep, practical understanding of the complexities of foster care, the systemic challenges carers navigate, and the emotional landscape of caring for children who have experienced trauma.

Beyond my direct caring role, I am passionate about caring for carers. I facilitate a Grief and Transition group as a volunteer with Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers SA, creating safe spaces where carers can process loss, change and system pressures. I have also provided informal advocacy and peer support to carers during times of crisis, helping them feel heard, informed and less alone.

Prior to chairing the Carer Council, I was involved in establishing my service provider's internal Carer Consultation Group. This initiative brought carers and leadership together in a professional forum to elevate carer voice in policy, practice and decision-making. That collaborative model strengthened my understanding of governance, respectful consultation and systemic reform.

Over the past year as Chair, my leadership capacity has continued to grow. I have strengthened my ability to work constructively with senior stakeholders, contribute to strategic conversations, and ensure that lived experience remains central in decision-making at ministerial and executive levels.

### **What has chairing the Carer Council meant to you over the past two years?**

Chairing the Carer Council has been both humbling and empowering. I have witnessed carers' lived experiences being heard and acknowledged at ministerial and executive levels. That visibility matters.

This role has reinforced my belief in the power of collective voice and collaborative reform. Systemic change takes time, persistence and respectful dialogue — but I am confident we are moving in a positive direction.

Most importantly, this journey has deepened my commitment to ensuring carers feel valued, respected and supported. The resilience, wisdom and compassion within our carer community inspires me daily, and I remain hopeful and determined about the progress still to come.