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Grandparents For Grandchildren

Grandparents
For
Grandchildren



GFGSA 2020 VISION SURVEY

Report on Survey Results

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Executive Summary

Commentary

In February/March 2020 for a period of two (2) weeks, a survey was conducted by Grandparents For Grandchildren (GFGSA) of approximately one-third its client database being those Grandcarers¹ with email addresses (n=571). The ten (10) questions were responded to by 29% of the survey population using the *SurveyMonkey* platform. All questions provided strong outcomes and clearly state the status and thoughts of Grandcarers in respect of their role as the primary carer of their Grandchild/ren. The questions provided to the database were:

- Question 1: Have you been the primary carer of your grandchild/ren for any period of time?
- Question 2: How many Grandchildren have been under your care for any period of time?
- Question 3: How many Grandchildren are currently under your care?
- Question 4: How many of your Grandchildren have been placed in the child protection system?
- Question 5: How many have been successfully returned to their parents?
- Question 6: How many have grown up/moved on independently?
- Question 7: If they are still in your care, are they still at risk of entering the child protection system?
- Question 8: And if they are still in your care, has this care improved their future prospects?
- Question 9: Has GFGSA been of assistance to you at any time?
- Question 10: Comments/Feedback.

All results are provided within this report, including comments relating to each question. All responses to question 10 are provided as received and are grouped within themes at Appendix 1.

Conclusions

This survey must be recognised as providing an exclusive insight into the status and thoughts of Grandcarers. Given that the GFGSA database is unique, the results of the survey provide a glimpse of the life and the trials and tribulations that are experienced by respondent Grandcarers.

It should also be recognised that the response level of 29% is statistically a very solid representation of the total population of the GFGSA database.

¹ See Glossary for definition

Moreover, the response level is arguably a valid representation of all Grandcarers within South Australia, and in fact Australia, that are in similar circumstances beyond the GFGSA database.

It should also be recognised that although Grandcarers do not necessarily *plan* to be the primary carers of their Grandchild/ren, given their predicament, they endeavour to provide the best possible outcomes whilst being aware of their own circumstances and limitations. These including age/health profile, employment/retirement status, financial position, family relationships and social environment.

The combination of these factors² is often the catalyst for Grandcarers to approach GFGSA for assistance, support and advice.

The outcomes of this survey provide a clear mandate for GFGSA and its roles and functions to be sustained, regularised, and recognised as the key organisation providing very early intervention services. That is, the only organisation of its type in South Australia and Australia proactively engaged in keeping Grandchildren with their Grandcarers, rather than becoming part of the statutory child protection system (i.e. foster care and residential care).

The survey outcomes lead to the below recommendations.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. The South Australian Government and its relevant Agencies:
 - a. Recognise the value of the services provided by Grandparents for Grandchildren.
 - b. Formally acknowledge the positive impact that GFGSA has on the lives and outcomes for Grandcarers and their Grandchildren.
 - c. Compensate GFGSA for providing services that have a direct reduction on State Treasury expenditure associated with child protection processes.
2. The funding of key staff positions be a priority to assure the sustainability of Grandparents for Grandchildren:
 - a. Positions (i.e. roles and responsibilities) be identified for inclusion in a State Treasury funded salary budget.
 - b. A salary budget be developed and applied for commencing in the 2020/21 financial year under a *Simple Procurement Process* for a 3+3+3 contract agreement in line with the State Procurement Board's mandated SANFRAG.
 - c. The salary budget be secured against relevant and measurable organisational performance outcomes.

² Grandchild/ren situation and Grandcarer circumstances.

Background

Purpose

It was proposed that a survey be developed and forwarded to Grandcarers using *SurveyMonkey*. The intent and priority for this survey was based on building knowledge on the:

- Existing status of Grandparents and Kinship Carers (Grandcarers), who have identified themselves as being the primary carers of their Grandchildren.
- Ascertaining why Grandcarers connect with GFGSA.
- Gaining an understanding of the strength of that connection between Grandcarers and GFGSA.

Scope of the Survey

The survey was issued to Grandcarers with email addresses listed on the GFGSA database as at February 2020. Information regarding the survey was initially provided by email to all Grandcarers on the database. Grandcarers were able to access the survey from 18th February 2020 to 3rd March 2020. Follow-up /prompt emails were also provided during the survey access period. Following closure of the survey, all data was downloaded from the *SurveyMonkey* site for analysis and summation. The results are provided in this report dated 18 March 2020.

The survey was purposefully kept to ten (10) questions, to limit the burden on clients as well as minimise the cost to GFGSA.

Design

The questions provided to Grandcarers were of the following design.

Type	Format	Number
Closed question	Yes/No	4
	Choice	5
Open ended qualitative response	Open text	1
Likert scale	n/a	0

Response

The response rate is shown below:

- Total Grandcarers (with emails) on data base 571
- Grandcarers who completed the survey 166
- Response rate 29%

Analysis

The following chapter “Results” provides a summary of responses and commentary regarding each question.

Results

Question 1: Have you been the primary carer of your grandchild/ren for any period of time?

Response:

Yes	141	85.45%
No	24	14.55%
Skipped	1	
TOTAL	166	

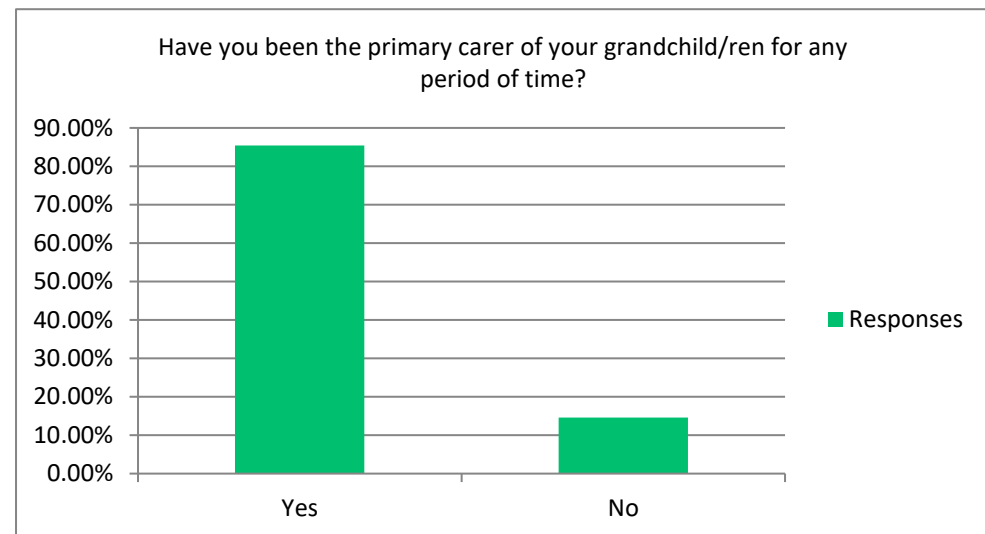
85% (n=141) of respondent Grandcarers have been the primary carer (or custodial³ Grandcarer) of their Grandchild/ren.

Comment:

This shows that 85% (n=141) of respondent Grandcarers are significantly attuned to the needs of Grandchildren as:

- the current primary carers, or a
- a past primary carer

Approximately 14% (n=24) of respondent Grandcarers are currently not the primary carer but are nevertheless listed as Grandcarers. These respondent Grandcarers can generally be classified as sentinel or alienated Grandcarers³.



³ See Glossary for definitions

Question 2: How many Grandchildren have been under your care for any period of time?

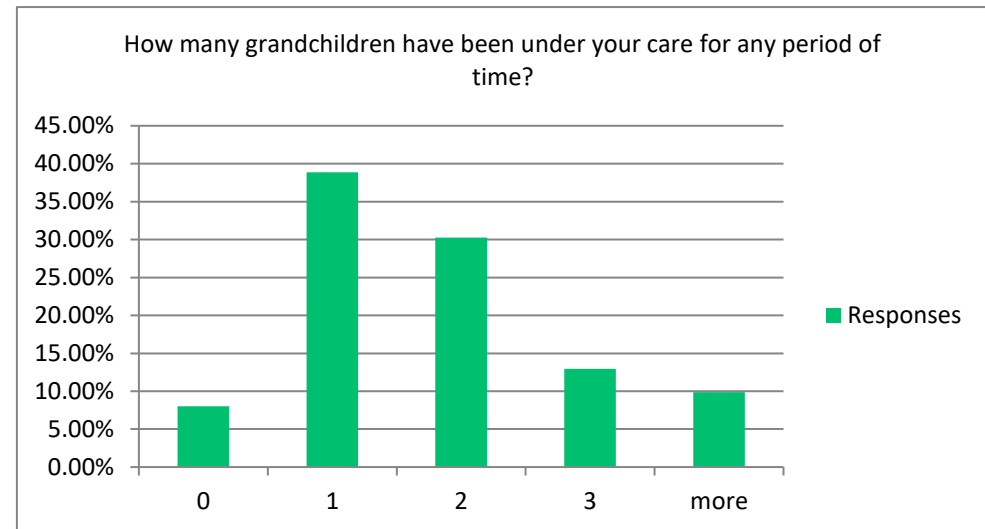
Response:

0	13	8.02%
1	63	38.89%
2	49	30.25%
3	21	12.96%
more	16	9.88%
skipped	4	
TOTAL	166	

10% (n=16) of respondent Grandcarers have been the primary carer for four or more Grandchildren; whilst more than 50% (n=86) of respondent Grandcarers have been carer for 2 or more Grandchildren.

Comment:

An extrapolation of this response; indicates that 162 respondents Grandparents have cared for a minimum of 288 Grandchildren. Therefore, on average, each Grandcarer has cared for 1.78 Grandchildren.



Question 3: How many Grandchildren are currently under your care?

Response:

0	53	32.12%
1	58	35.15%
2	39	23.64%
3	9	5.45%
more	6	3.64%
skipped	1	
TOTAL	166	

4% (n=6) of respondent Grandcarers are currently the primary carer of four or more Grandchildren; whilst more than 32% (n=54) of respondent Grandcarers are currently the primary carer of 2 or more Grandchildren.

Comment:

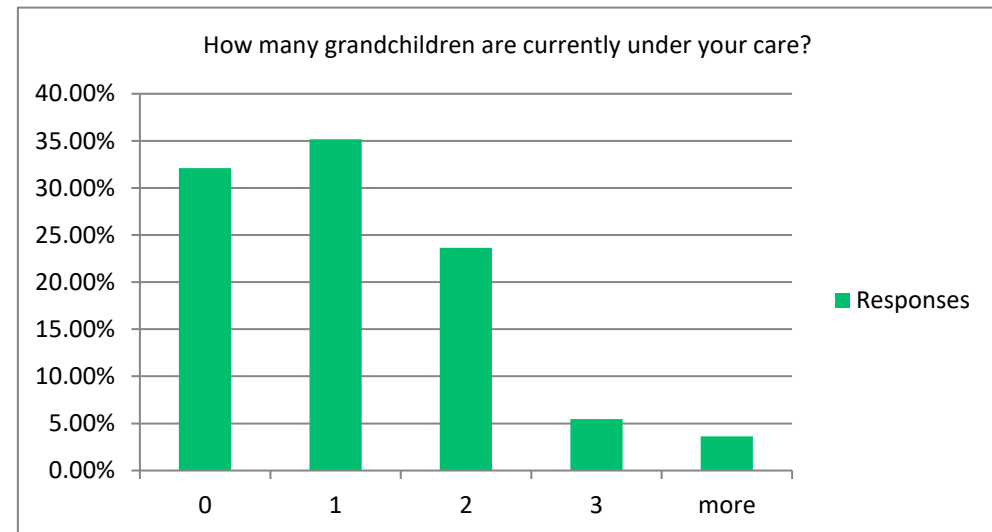
An extrapolation of this response; indicates that 112 respondent Grandcarers are caring for at minimum 187 Grandchildren. Therefore, on average, each grandparent client is currently caring for 1.67 Grandchildren.

The average number of Grandchildren currently receiving primary care from Grandcarers is consistent with average number of Grandchildren receiving primary care over the longer period from Grandcarers, as shown via question 2 responses.

32% (n=53) of respondent Grandcarers are not caring for any Grandchildren currently.

Conclusions are:

1. There is continued demand (and stress) placed on Grandcarers; and
2. Grandcarers who were carers (questions 1 and 2) have not left GFGSA's database, largely due to:
 - a. The alienated or sentinel nature of their circumstances;
 - b. The continued support with which they are provided; and/or
 - c. The commitment they are offering back to GFGSA in return for the assistance they were provided in the past.



Question 4: How many of your Grandchildren have been placed in the child protection system?

Response:

0	119	72.12%
1	20	12.12%
2	12	7.27%
3	5	3.03%
more	9	5.45%
skipped	1	
TOTAL	166	

72% (n=119) of respondent Grandcarers have stated that their Grandchildren have not been placed in the child protection system.

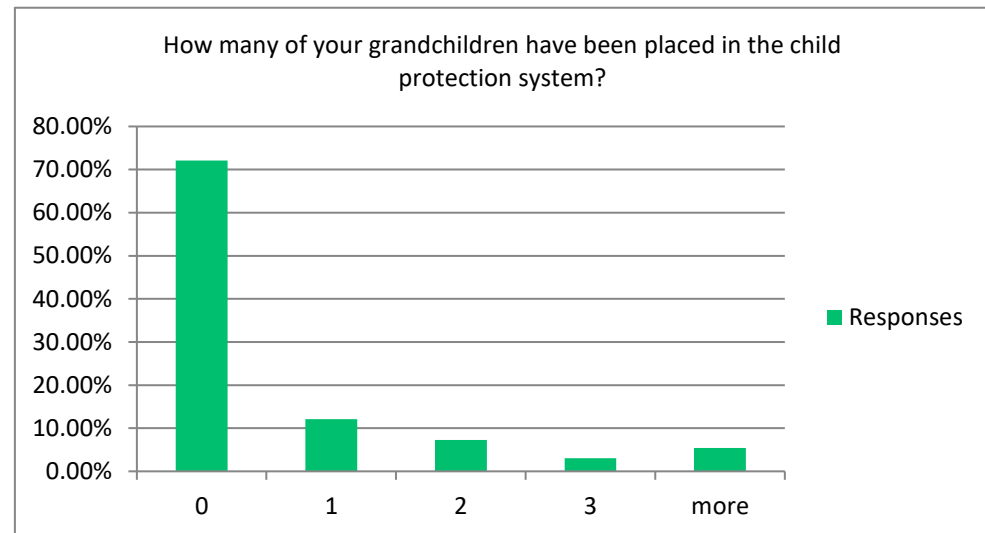
Nevertheless, 28% (n=46) of respondent Grandcarers have indicated that at minimum 94+ Grandchildren have been placed in the child protection system generally as the result of the DCP removing the child/ren from their parent.

Comment:

The possible outcomes associated with these responses are significant.

The respondent Grandcarers have indicated that (at minimum), 119 Grandchildren were not placed in the child protection system. This means these children avoided other forms of care including foster care and residential care, both of which incur substantial cost to the State Government.

If respondent Grandcarers were not providing the full time care for 119+ Grandchildren, then any number of these Grandchildren could have been placed in the child protection system.



Question 5: How many have been successfully returned to their parents?

Response:

0	131	79.88%
1	15	9.15%
2	12	7.32%
3	4	2.44%
more	2	1.22%
skipped	2	
TOTAL	166	

80% (n=131) of respondent Grandcarers indicated 131+ Grandchildren have NOT been successfully returned to their parents.

Comment:

The response to this question is also significant.

Respondent Grandcarers (n=131) who are providing full time care for Grandchildren, are doing so as the result of parents of the Grandchildren being unable or incapable of doing so. This implies, the 80% (n=131) respondent Grandcarers are providing extended periods of care and nurturing for their Grandchildren.

This has implications for:

- Grandcarers;
- GFGSA;
- The State Government;
- The Commonwealth Government; and
- The doctrine of “reunification”.

If Grandcarers are unable to continue their support of their Grandchildren due to financial, social, physical and mental stresses; then this will have a multiplier effect on the:

- State Government for foster care or residential care; and
- Commonwealth Government through disability, pension and family assistance benefits.



Question 6: How many have grown up/moved on independently?

Response:

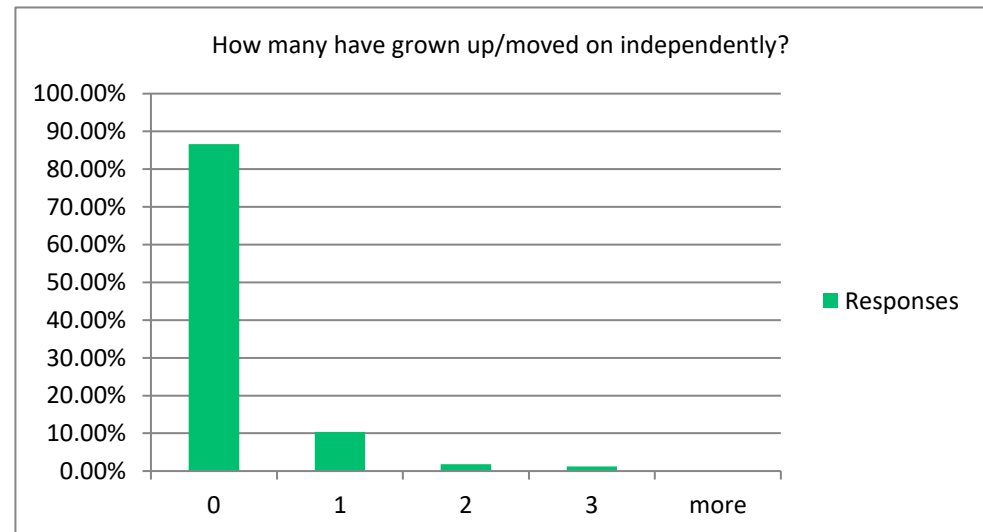
0	142	86.59%
1	17	10.37%
2	3	1.83%
3	2	1.22%
more	0	0.00%
skipped	2	
TOTAL	166	

87% (n=142) respondent Grandcarers indicated that at minimum 142+ Grandchildren have NOT grown up/moved on independently.

Comment:

Two explanations can be offered:

- GFGSA is a relatively young organisation and many Grandcarers have been caring for Grandchildren from birth or in their younger years; and
- Many Grandchildren being cared for by Grandcarers have complex needs, which may mean they will never be able to live independently and will reside in supported accommodation if independence is possible at all.



Question 7: If they are still in your care, are they still at risk of entering the child protection system?

Response:

Yes	34	21.52%
No	124	78.48%
skipped	8	
TOTAL	166	

78% (n=124) of respondent Grandcarers indicated that at minimum 124+ Grandchildren currently in their care are not at risk of entering the child protection system.

This indicates that they either have formal custody arrangements in place or are satisfied that DCP have withdrawn any ongoing care concerns.

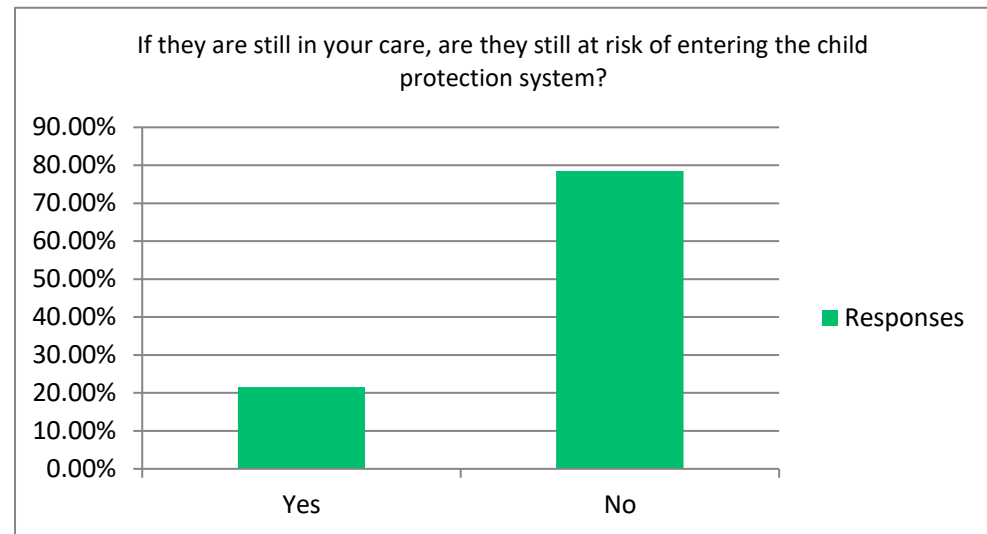
21% (n=34) of respondent Grandcarers are concerned that their Grandchildren may be 'at risk' of entering the child protection system.

Comment:

This question opens up a series of additional questions and comments.

In regard to the 21% of respondent Grandcarers who responded 'yes', these children may have open care concerns in place with DCP with no official resolution communicated to the Grandcarers, or the Grandcarers may feel ill-equipped to meet the long-term care commitments required for complex-needs children in their care. There are many reasons for Grandcarers to feel insecure without formal court orders in place and ongoing support.

Most importantly, 78% of respondents feel confident that the children in their care will remain within family and community.



Question 8: And if they are still in your care, has this care improved their future prospects?

Response:

Yes	123	79.87%
No	31	20.13%
skipped	12	
TOTAL	166	

80% (n=123) of respondent Grandcarers have indicated, Grandchildren currently in their care, have improved future prospects.

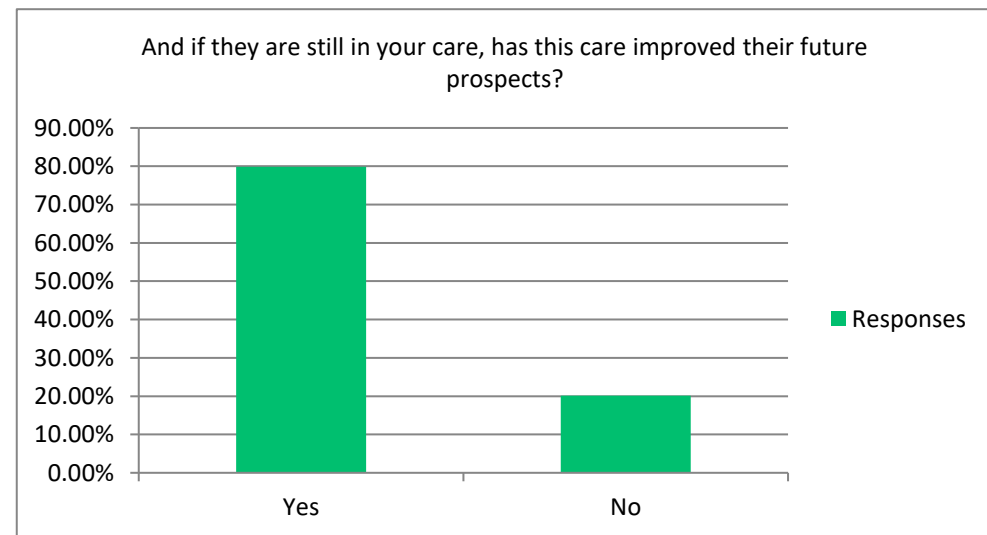
Comment:

This question provides a glimpse of the complex and difficult arrangements Grandcarers have when caring for Grandchildren:

- Some may have responded based on wishful thinking (i.e. 'glass half full') – that is an emotional response;
- Others may have responded positively because the Grandcarers believe that they have provided a better/ stable/ emotional place for their Grandchildren; and
- Others again may have firm plans or direct actions in place and can see positive changes happening now and into the future for their Grandchildren.

Those Grandcarers who believe that their care will not improve the future prospect for their Grandchild/ren, may have reached this conclusion based on:

- The perception of the quality of their care being deficient;
- Grandchildren are 'at risk' and may not recover from those risks; or
- Grandchildren have complex needs which translates to poor/worse future prospects.



Question 9: Has GFGSA been of assistance to you at any time?

Response:

Yes	155	95.09%
No	8	4.91%
skipped	3	
TOTAL	166	

95% (n=155) of respondent Grandcarers indicated that GFGSA has been of assistance to them.

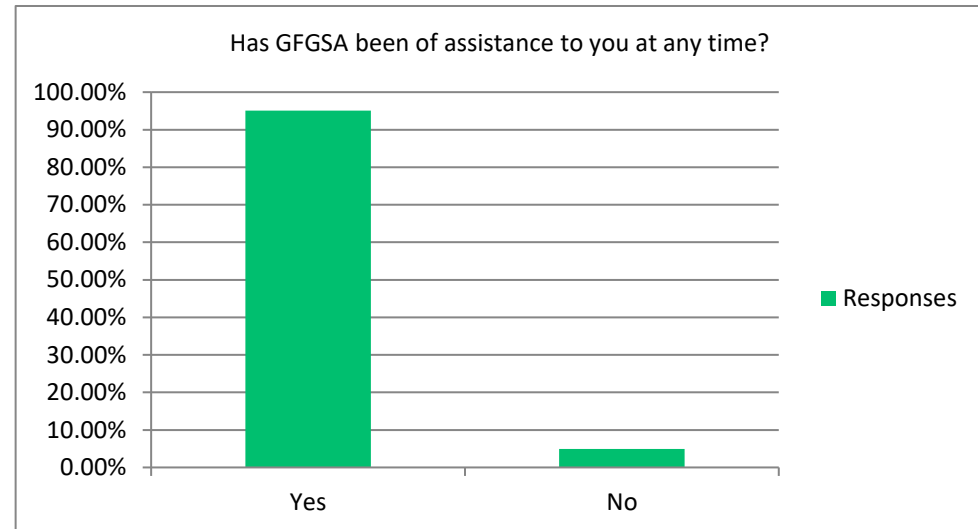
5% (n=8) of respondent Grandcarers indicated GFGSA has not been of assistance.

Comment:

A significantly high number (95%) of respondent Grandcarers has recognised GFGSA has been of assistance to them. This has been validated further through the responses to question 10 (comments/feedback) where at least 86 respondents provided positive statements, listed as a group - 'GFGSA Support / Advice / Information'.

A small, 5% (n=8) of respondent Grandcarers indicated GFGSA has not been of assistance. These responses could be the result of:

- The respondent Grandcarers being past Grandcarers and have not sought assistance recently.
- The respondent Grandcarers have not valued the assistance provided as being useful to their needs.
- The respondent Grandcarers recognising that GFGSA could not help, as their circumstances were outside the role and function of GFGSA.
- The respondent Grandcarer simply concluding nothing further could be done.



Question 10: Comments/Feedback

This question raised a considerable amount of free text and comments from respondent Grandcarers (n=118) expressing the circumstances that currently confront them or have confronted them.

All responses are attached at Appendix 1. No adjustments have been made to spelling, grammar or use of language. Each comment/feedback has been grouped with similar responses. To safeguard anonymity, the names of respondent Grandcarers and/or GFGSA staff have been redacted.

The group headings and the frequency of comments/feedback within each group heading, are shown below.

Group heading	Frequency
GFGSA support / advice / information	86
Access arrangements and concerns	9
Experience (past)	6
Court processes and outcomes	4
DCP focused comments/feedback	6
General	7
Total	118

Appendix 1

[Comments/Feedback](#)

GFGSA support / advice / information

- 1 Found the drug and alcohol workshop very good
- 2 GFGSA was the only significant support I could relate to and be supported by in the first crucial months and also ongoing support.
- 3 when contacting GFGSA I received not only sound advice but although spoke to a person with lived experiences, an open ear and incredible encouraging attitude.
- 4 When I was introduced to Grandparents for Grandchildren, I felt that I was not alone. It was reassuring to know I would be able to get the advice I needed.
- 5 Helpful organisation
- 6 Grandparents have been awesome. Helped us financially which has been a huge help.
- 7 Thank you immensely for the support given thus far 😊
- 8 I find it is nice to find someone who knows and understands what grandparents go through.
- 9 This Organisation provided us with vital information and links re support. legal advice , welfare and social support enabled a successful transfer from child protection to our home - and it is continuing !
- 10 I've very much appreciated the help from GFG. I've had phone conversations and food hampers and I have felt so blessed and know that people care about myself and my Grandson. Thankyou so very much for caring D Kind regards [REDACTED] .
- 11 I had great moral support from GrandparentsForGrandchildren but no support of any kind from any government agency despite numerous reports being made to them about the neglect of my grandson. The only option I had to protect this four year old child was to make application to the Family Court. I endured costly legal expenses, plus fuel and wear and tear on my car to comply with court-ordered fortnightly access visits from my home on southern Yorke Peninsula to Mount Barker and am still suffering the financial fall-out from that. And the whole situation took a toll on my health too.
- 12 Thanks for GFGSA. Helped so many families.
- 13 This is the only group who have given information to grandparents who are suddenly dealing with these dynamics of family, and they are the only ones who understand the practical, emotional and legal matters we encounter. I am Extremely thankful they are there to help and assist us.
- 14 Grandparents for Grandchildren are a great organization and need more support
- 15 GFGC is very helpful and supportive service which helps grandparents cope and that in turn is of great benefit to the children they are caring for.
- 16 Very helpful [REDACTED] attended 2 appointments with us at fsa office and helped a great deal thankyou

- 17 I appreciate the support given to me by GFGSA. Not only because of you are always available for advice, but also pointing me in the right direction with assistance accessible to me and the children. The monthly support groups also give me a chance to share with others in the same situations. Thank you. There have been times when I did not know who else to turn to.
- 18 There needs to be more support for grandparents as unfortunately more and more grandparents are finding themselves in this position.
- 19 Wonderful support with information and advice. Financial assistance greatly appreciated
- 20 My Grandchildren are not at risk nor have they been in my care . I contacted you because one of my children have denied me seeing my Grandchildren for no apparent reason. It's been 6 months now and broken my heart. I have an appointment next month with Relationships Australia to mediate and try and sort out why so that I may see my Grandchildren again. I have been very close and i don't understand why. I would have them at least overnight once per fortnight. They adore me and me them . Sorry this may not be useful to you.
- 21 If it wasn't for the advice and guidance from GFGSA several years ago, i would not know where my little grandson would be today. I was working full-time and unexpectedly needed to start caring for my 2 year old grandson. The Government organisations could not assist or talk to me, as i was not the legal parent or guardian, they were no help at all. One lady from Centrelink at Prospect did recommend for me to contact GFGSA, which i did immediately. I met with the Lawyer, free of charge (luckily, as i was already paying an unexpected fee of \$500 per week for child care for my grandson, so i could continue to work). With the advice and information from the Lawyer, i was able to organise legal guardianship and resolve other issues relating to being the sole carer of my grandson without further stress.
- 22 I was attending the alienated grandparents group approx a year ago. It was wonderful support and I will always be most grateful for the care I received in person, phone and emails. During the most painful 3 years of my life. I am now in a much happier place and enjoying every moment available to me with my Grandchildren. Thank you
- 23 I couldn't of got though the past 6 months without your help. I was lost and not sure where to go or what to do and Yous help me every step of the way I can't thank you anoth for the help I have received Thanks [REDACTED]
- 24 Thank you for your support
- 25 have helped me with xmass box and school fees,,,
- 26 Thank you so much for exisiting as a support base - without the ongoing support I receive I'm not sure I would have the relationship I have with my granddaughter & would have given up on so much more by now The team at G4G SA is super amazing!!!
- 27 The work of the organisation is saving the lives of children..... it is vital work.
- 28 Thankyou for guidance when didnt know where else to go to
- 29 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] give the best hugs. Just knowing that someone is going to listen to me provides so much support and reassurance where other organisations and services have not. The practical support has meant so much to my peace of mind and the finanical support is such a big help. I felt so alone in my struggle before I came across the organisation. Thank you.
- 30 The help and support I have received has been invaluable. I would not have been able to move forward and look after my twin granddaughter without their help and support. They would have possibly been in foster care or back with their drug addicted parents. I cannot thank them enough. Yours sincerely [REDACTED]

- 31 When our Grandchild was placed with us your organisation was able to offer us constructive advice and support . We have also attended information and guest speaker meetings. These have been helpful and informative.
- 32 Thankyou to gp4gks for all there support
- 33 Thank you for great phone support and for Links to the Centrelink for the period I needed help. It was extrememly helpful and important to us at the time. It greatly helped my granddaughters transition back to her mum.
- 34 Have son on disability pension living with us as well.He is the father and I get him to do most of the looking after [REDACTED]
- 35 GFGSA are a fantastic help to Grandparents because there is not much help elsewhere. They are the voice for our Grandchildren
- 36 The support we have received from not only our advocate [REDACTED] but others from the team has been fantastic. We couldn't have got through this terrible time, 'saving' our gorgeous little people from the trauma and emotional abuse they had endured without GFGSA.
- 37 Absilutely fantastic organisation to help grand parents.
- 38 GFGSA have been a great help to me and my grandson.
- 39 Up to date information. Moral support. Understanding and care. Followup Friendship
- 40 I am in a rural town many hundred miles from the city but if I need help I know I can phone for support and help. Thank you.
- 41 Firstly, Thank you to Father Michael from St Andrews who led me in your direction at GFGSA. thank you from the bottom of my heart, for the mental health support throughout the year at your monthly meetings . Thank you for all the individual support. Thank you for legal advice ,thank you for the financial aid that helps provide the children with the extras courses an sports education. An thank you for the Christmas hamper an the gifts ,it help make Christmas even better. That you to all at GFGSA
- 42 GFGC has been a blessing.
- 43 GFGSA have been fantastic support and continue ongoing assistance.
- 44 My friend in Qld told me about GFGSA 3 years ago when I became disconnected from 4 of my Grandchildren. I thought I was the only one suffering from this loss. By sharing our stories we grandparents have been heard and comforted while we try to navigate this unknown territory. GFGSA is invaluable. Please keep up the great reaching out work you do. Thanks.
- 45 GFGSA are a wonderful support group we need them. They are people whom understand and are with us in good and bad times.
- 46 GFGSA have been a fantastic support to me and especially my parents (the grandparents of the children). I have a sense that those who we have interacted with from GFGSA know first hand what our family is going through. My parents, particularly, seem to have felt more comfortable reaching out for help to your organization, I suspect this was in large part to our initial meeting with a GFGSA representative who was of similar age to them.
- 47 Our girls would have gone without some Christmas gifts if not for you we can't thank you enough can't wait to get together at your Goolwa village at some stage

- 48 Helped me to understand what I can do in my son's D V violence, with our Grandchildren and their well being
- 49 Thanks to gfgsa i was able to pay for sporting costs and clothing I am sincerely grateful for the financial help I received last year. Unfortunately I have not been able to return my granddaughter to ballet yet as it costs \$180 per school term and I also have her brother and sister residing with me. [REDACTED]
- 50 it has kept me informed, just sad i have not been able to attend meetings as residing in the country
- 51 I am so appreciative of the help / funding I have been given to help ease our burden . Boys r happy & moving on in life . Proud grandparent
- 52 They have provided me with information I needed and have cared about what is happening. The info I have received has been vital to my decision making.
- 53 Really great service thank you for all of your help. You are all awesome
- 54 Have rang with many questions ,seeking advice, staff extremely helpfull.
- 55 GFGSA have given advice and emotional support which was greatly appreciated at the time. The family court judge requested I become involved in family court proceedings after child protection and the ministers office refused to accept his request for intervention with the children. My becoming involved enabled the judge to put me in a position to over see the children's care, education needs and medical care when the parents neglect thing things.
- 56 I would be lost without their support
- 57 Grandparents with grand children have been wonderful to me and my grandson
- 58 Without GFGSA we don't know how we would have managed. They assisted us with finance and support for preparing our granddaughter for her school uniforms and school camp. So grateful. We asked the Centrelink grandpartents specialist and they couldn't help and referred us the GFGSA We are pensioners and trying to cope with little money to give the best secondary education we can and GFGSA help us how to cope. Finance is important but so is the caring support given by them
- 59 I'd be lost without gets a guidance
- 60 Support ,Advocacy, Finacial reinbursement for children, linking to services, Christmas hampers, provide information, group work
- 61 Thank you for all your support and help
- 62 I'm very grateful for the advice and information provided by GPFGC and for the financial assistance also offered for the Education and Sports Program
- 63 Thankyou Grandparents for Grandchildren for all your assistance over the years. My Grandson is in care and is likely to need assistance past the age of 18years (under Minster's care). He has many health and psychological problems.
- 64 GFGSA has been a tremendous help. we are on the pension and it costs a lot to support a 15 year old boy. Ant support is greatly appreciated.
- 65 Hi [REDACTED] has been so helpful and late December DCP handed my granddaughter [REDACTED] over to me its been hard going but no wayis she going back into care which has let her down
..tell [REDACTED] I will ring her ..cheers [REDACTED]

- 66 GFGK has been my savipur, [REDACTED] is always there for a chat in the bad times. The financial help for school uniforms is a fantastic help and takes the pressure off a little.
- 67 gfgsa great advice help and support
- 68 Very efficant and helpfull easy to communicate with thank you
- 69 Fantastic support group thankyou
- 70 The assistance that my husband I received, from Grandparents for Grankids, made the difference with the Grandchildren being able to stay with us, as we were not getting any financial assistance for them at that stage. Thankyou for your organisation.
- 71 GFGSA has helped us obtain a lot of things for our girls that we would never have been able to afford if they had not helped us.
- 72 GFGSA has been of significant assistance to me through financial and most importantly, emotional support. I cannot praise them enough....
- 73 Thankyou for what you do
- 74 GFGSA have helped me when I was really down out out which being physically and mentally
- 75 Have been given great support and help from gfgsa nice to not feel judged and people actually understand what u r going thru thankyou so much
- 76 GFGSA have provided us with so much support in so ways. We are so grateful to them. Amazing people, who go above and beyond to help.
- 77 thankyou for all you do, i have my granddaughter and her son, so my great grandson, unfortunately the dept wants this baby at any cost to the welfare of these kids
- 78 GFGSA has been the only main organisation who have assisted our family, apart from our local Church. Not one government agency, who ought to have helped, has been there to offer any assistance or even support or referral to services, whatsoever! Without the significant assistance and support of GFGSA and some help from our local Church with regular delivery of some bread etc, and minor assistance from strangers in the street, I do not think my Grandchildren would have done as well as they have and been in the better position they are now in today. Just knowing that the staff/volunteers of GFGSA are there to support us grandparents and families who have found themselves caring for their Grandchildren, often in a less than ideal situation, for example - with little resources/financial backing, has been wonderful and reassuring to know that people in our community actually care and together we can all make a difference to help raise our beautiful children to grow them up in a loving and nurturing environment to become viable and healthy adults within our society. In my view, there is a massive failure in our Government in that it fails to provide the services and support "equally" to all families in our community, particularly to those grandparents who have stepped up to help their Grandchildren through crisis situations. It is time for the Government to recognise that grandparents who care for their Grandchildren are providing a stable, loving environment to them, thus preventing these children from entering into the already overburdened & understaffed Child Protection System, hence simultaneously saving the government thousands of dollars for the costs to raise the children within a foster care family or other care option. Rather, it seems, that grandparents are penalised and financially crippled by having to solely pay for the legal costs to protect their Grandchildren through the family court system, without legal aid assistance, and to pay for the children's health and other expenses to protect and raise them, without the help and assistance of the government agencies that should be there. Grandparents are being financially crippled in their senior years, and this is unfair when we have worked hard all of our lives for the purpose of securing our financial future to support our own living and pay for our health expenditure in our senior years. The system needs a massive overhaul! I am so grateful for the organisation GFGSA; as above-mentioned, apart from our local Church and strangers in the street, this is the only voluntary non-profit organisation to date, which have stepped up and offered any real and practical support to our family. Incidentally, even services such as the Smith Family cannot assist my Grandchildren in any way, because we supposedly do not live in a low socio-economic area to warrant such assistance. Similarly the children's school is listed as

category 7 school and hence this means, it does not warrant the assistance of the children having access to a well-being practitioner - these services are only available to students who attend a school which is categories with a lower category number and is located in low socio-economic area. Where is the equity and fairness for our children? It seems the viewpoint of Government is that children who attend category 7 schools, do not have family problems. Shame on the government for the inequity and opportunity to all children, regardless of where they reside or what school they attend. Shame on the government for the lack of direct support to grandparents who care for their Grandchildren, who through no fault of their own, have taken on the important role of caring for and raising their Grandchildren. If the government could only recognise the big overall picture and actually support families to take up this important role, I am certain there would be less pressure placed onto the welfare (Child Protection system) and hence DCP could actually focus on helping children properly and not leave them to slip through the system and end up in a box as we have sadly seen in the past. Thank you to GFGSA and all of those wonderful people who are associated with this organisation. Please continue to do what you are doing as I am certain many families would be lost without your assistance. Anonymous.

- 79 GFGSA is of vital importance and support . Government funding and support is uppermost.
- 80 I have had short term care of both my grandsons but they are not in my full time care..their parents have full time care of them. I have used GFGC before when I was alienated from them & found them to be a very helpful organisation.
- 81 GFGSA do a great job Thanks for all the help you give to us
- 82 We have custody of our two disabled Grandchildren, and without GFGSA, we do not think we would have survived the process. This organisation is a one stop shop where we were able to get information about entitlements, and what process would go through when going through the Family Court. As the children have disabilities, GFGSA have continued to support us emotionally and have assisted us in providing care to the children. We receive no financial support from the Government, and GFGSA have helped us with school uniforms, and also with piano tutoring, which is something that we could not offer our grandson, as we spent a significant amount of money in legal fees and have utilised all of our life savings. The children are in a loving and nurturing environment, and this is clearly demonstrated with change of behaviours and achievements that the children had made. Our eldest grandson was being violent to teachers and peers and since being our care, these behaviours have stopped and he is now described as a kind and considerate young man. These are developments that would not have occurred in the Child Protection System. The government is saving millions of dollars in our particular case, but yet they offer us no support and state 'You are doing your duty.' My husband and I are exhausted, as our youngest grandchild is Severely Intellectually Disabled, Autistic and suffers with ADHD. We both work fulltime to pay off the debt that accrued in legal fees and setup costs. Child Protection received a notification that there were drugs involved and the children were at risk, they breached the legislation by not making an Care & Protection Application in the Youth Court. My husband and I made the application in the Family Court, because we were not prepared to give evidence in the Coroner's Court, because Child Protection failed them. They also did not code the intakes correctly, as both children have disabilities. These children are thriving because of us and because of the support that GFGSA give us. If we had not intervened, the boys would have been separated, and would like have fallen victim to that system. If we did not have the debt, than one of us would drop to part-time hours to attend therapy sessions and help them advance even further. I would welcome a phone call from a politician, and I would also welcome them to come and spend a day with our family, and see how much we do. Finally, we stopped the 'cycle'. The cycle that these children would have continued, as their parents on in that 'cycle'. So the question is; How much have we actually saved the government? But yet, you cannot even recognise us as formal carers. Child Protection were criticised in the Royal Commission for not making an application to the Youth Court when they are aware that there are drugs and violence involved, but yet this department is still letting down our children. Since being in our care, our eldest grandson has disclosed sexual and violent abuse. No-one took the time to even talk to him. We heard his calls for help and we spent many hours on the phone to Child Protection, which fell on deaf ears. We didn't turn our backs on them.. We made an application to the Family Court. The system is not a failing system, it is a failed system. Too many children living in community homes, learning behaviours from older children and continuing the 'cycle'. The answer is easy... Support families that are willing to care for family members. Support us financially, and allow to offer more to our Grandchildren than we can currently offer. If Child Protection had made that application, we would have been supported, but because they went against their own policies and procedures, we are now called 'informal

carers'... I cannot help but ask if the reason applications aren't made is to save money for the Department, as the Department would then have to offer some financial assistance. So many questions, and no-one prepared to answer them. Thank god for GFGSA.

83 Gave me a lot of information to work with

84 Grandparents for Grandchildren are a massive support for carers in SA

85 GFGSA has been a vital source of information and help. Advice on dealing with Centrelink. Advice on dealing with lawyers . Help information from meetings and guest speakers. GFGSA has also provided very helpful \$ in regards to sports and educational costs. I would have floundered without GFGSA assistance.

86 I would like to thank you for your help at Christmas it was a big help.

Access arrangements and concerns

- 1 my case is not applicable for this as after trying to murder their father and lying to the police and the courts the mother has now kidnapped the children and I fear for their safety - i have been granted a live with order - but that is pointless given the mother kidnapped the children
- 2 Via phone contact this month due to me unable to see my 2 young Grandchildren as a consequence of my daughter's reluctance to allow me to have contact with them over a period of last 10 months
- 3 I sort advice some time ago in relation to 2 of my Grandchildren who now living with their father and his new wife since the untimely death of my daughter their mother who was their primary care giver until she became ill and I took on the care of her and her children only since her death 26 /11/2017 I have been permitted very little contact with these little girls now I am being informed that the step mother is changing the children's surname to hers . I have tried making arrangements for regular contact but to no avail
- 4 Whilst our 2 grandchildren are no longer under our guardianship we prepare the childrens school lunches pick them up from their mother (our daughter).take them to school .After school we pick them up .for play at our place .(we have a carer assist us from 3.30-6.30 .)she mainly plays with them while we do their reading prepare their baths and tea . They are returned home between 6.30 - 7.30 depending on sport etc. The children stay at our daughters all weekend unless there are any issues or they have sport or parties etc to go to in which case we could have one or both children most of a sat or sun .
- 5 I don't care for my 4 Grandchildren . They live with their mother, she's a good mother. Unfortunately I have been denied visiting them. I don't cause trouble, I am only interested in seeing them. I send birthday and Xmas money in cards but don't know if they received them.
- 6 Granted sole parental rights via family courts in 2018
- 7 I am not a primary carer but as a paternal grandmother have watched the mother and her family alienate their father. As a social worker formerly in Child Protection I observe my Grandchildren quite rightly aligning with those they live with but I observe their distress and health issues as a consequence.
- 8 Grandchildren living with Mum during school term. I and their dad have them whenever we can.

- 9 My grandson has been taken back by his mother and I'm not allowed to see him anymore after I said if she doesn't want to help me raise him and get him help I want him signed over to me

Experience (past)

- 1 Grandchild now 20yrs old & soon to have child of her own. She was only with us for 3mths, then went back to her mother.
- 2 I have Legal Guardianship of one Granddaughter and have and do help the older one aswell, who nows has her own children.
- 3 Thankyou for your advisory service which was enough for us back 10 years ago .
- 4 Our Grandchildren are no longer in our care. We had various disagreements with DCP. And as a result of this I believe we were victimised. Hence we no longer have care of our Grandchildren as well as very limited access. All of our Grandchildren are in care unfortunately. I have the highest praise for all of the GFGSA team. In particular [REDACTED] who has been our advocate.
- 5 The youngest of my 3 Grandchildren is the one at greatest risk due to the time spent with his mother. No parental supervision has resulted in an attitude of delinquent proportion.
- 6 Having one adult but with a disability he will probably still remain with us in foreseeable future

Court processes and outcomes

- 1 There needs to be something done to stop children being used as pawns when separation issues end up in court. There also needs to be more equity between the care and support of males and females. At the moment there seems to be a bias towards women. I think it would sometimes be better for children to live with their grandparents until all the conflict between parents had been resolved. Let's give children the best chance possible.
- 2 Grandchildren still with parent who abused them. Court ordered.
- 3 Boys 2 with their Dad who is currently appearing through the District Court. The other boy is with his Mum who has been through District & various M/Courts. I am hands on help with pickups, school & after school activities etc.
- 4 I have a grandchild I have been told I have haven't any legal right to see or contact.

DCP focused comments/feedback

- 1 My now 9 yr old grandson from Pt Augusta was put in his fathers car when he was 15 months old. Families SA reunification was complete when he was 4. His father did not allow him to attend kindy even while under their jurisdiction and I reported a suspected child sexual abuse when he was 2.(later confirmed by the child to be from his father's younger brother but the father didn't want to act on or report this). The mother returned home to help care for her son as soon as Families SA stepped out. They had 3 more

children continued family violence and drug use until 3 years ago. The father left in 2019 during the mothers last pregnancy as he had started a new relationship. The child continues now in the ft care of his mother and dcp have stipulated that his father is not allowed to have him at any time. DCP are supporting the mother as are Uniting Care/Salvation Army. My youngest daughter's only son is currently in my care and is in the reunification process and expected to be returned to his mum. I and initially my daughter herself supported a shared care arrangement with me as grandma and the mum sharing the care in a legally binding way but DCP don't do shared care - its either an 18 year order or return to parent/s. DOPM don't support reunification but do support shared care. Sorry if this is too much information.

- 2 Had 3 grandkids ,2 removed after 5 1/2 years in my care .The system is definitely not transparent and it's a lucky draw if you get a good worker but I can tell you I definitely got the bottom of the barrel .She was on a power trip and one day she will be held accountable for the trauma and emotional damage that has been done.
- 3 My granchildren were in my care for 3mths after an unsuccessful placement with the mother DCP placed them in care. I am currently trying to regain care and remove them from the system, not being too successful. Very disappointed in the system
- 4 we are extremely frustrated at the lack of support and action from DPC. We have been caring for our 2 Grandchildren (aged 4 and almost 2) for over 12 months and despite numerous reports to CARL snd phone calls to DPC, no one has made contact with us to check on the welfare of the children and despite requests for support none has been forthcoming. We both work full time and have therefore had to put our Grandchildren into childcare which with 50% subsidy from centrelink is leaving us \$1000 out of pocket per fortnight. As a result we have almost used up our life savings with still no prospect of getting any assistance.
- 5 Child protection asked me to take her in one day 6 years ago but I have never received one cent of any financial assistance from them. Custody was forced privately through Court at my expense. GFGSA are the only help we have had
- 6 DCP makes our lives quite miserable re our great granddaughter

General

- 1 Thanks
- 2 A lot of this survey really isn't designed for someone in my situation- special needs child and informal agreement
- 3 No comments
- 4 Q 7 ambiguous as child in my care is in child protection system currently.
- 5 Thank y
- 6 How can you answer these questions.? If I am trying to get access to my grand child !, the mother has issue. Her side of the family issues . Do not know witch way to go just looking for some advice or direction. [REDACTED]
- 7 The children are worth the cost to us.

Appendix 2

Glossary

Alienated Grandcarer

Those Grandcarers who have been separated from their Grandchild/ren as the result of a fractured or dysfunctional relationship with the parents of the Grandchild/ren, or their Grandchildren have been placed under a GoCE order and the Grandcarers have been denied access to them by DCP

Custodial Grandcarer

Those Grandcarers having primary care of their Grandchild/ren, either formally (via court order) or informally

Custody

Safe-keeping, care and protection, or guardianship

DCP

Department for Child Protection South Australia

GFGSA

Grandparents for Grandchildren

GoCE

Guardianship of the Chief Executive of DCP (Formerly Guardianship of the Minister – GOM)

Grandcarer

Those Grandparents who are non-statutory primary carers of Grandchildren; or Kinship Carers who are non-statutory primary carers of ‘related’ children

SANFRAG

South Australian Not for Profit Funding Rules and Guidelines

Sentinel

Grandparents who play a protective role either directly or indirectly to their Grandchildren