

# Hastings carers share their stories

THE value of carers was recognised during a meeting with a state government minister.

About 23 people from Port Macquarie Carers Group met with Minister for Ageing and Disability Services John Ajaka and Port Macquarie MP Leslie Williams last week.

The minister received a book which provides insights into the lives of carers from 16 families from the Port Macquarie area.

The book was assembled to inform decision-makers and those responsible for shaping social policy.

Mr Ajaka said the carer profile information would help enormously.

The government will release a carers strategy by the end of the year to underpin the way the government provides support for carers until 2019.

There are about 850,000 carers across the state.

Mr Ajaka told the group that carers must look after themselves too.

"I believe for a person to be cared for properly, for a person to be looked after properly long-term, we need our carers to be healthy," he said.

Mr Ajaka also spoke about the National Disability Insurance Scheme and answered questions.

Carer Ted Beck said the minister's visit was inspiring, informative and empow-



**Recognition:** Port Macquarie MP Leslie Williams, carer Ted Beck, Minister for Ageing and Disability Services John Ajaka and Port Macquarie Carers Group facilitator Dawn Davies talk about the role carers play in our community.

ering.

"In my 40 years of disability practice, never have I encountered a minister to sit down with and talk with, and not at, a carers group," he said. "The minister was kind enough to ring from the airport before leaving and arrange a meeting [with me]."

Mr Beck, who has cared for his son

Adam for four decades, said the carers group run by ACES was invaluable and he praised the group facilitator Dawn Davies and ACES.

Ms Davies said the minister's visit was valuable to show carers their role was recognised. Contact Dawn Davies on 6581 2348 for more information about the Port Macquarie Carers Group.

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