

# Media Release



3 August 2011

Carers Australia is the recognised national voice of Australian carers. Our members are the carers associations in each state and territory. We have no political affiliation. We work with all parties to achieve better outcomes for all carers.

We believe that all carers are entitled to the same rights, choices and opportunities as other Australians.

## Carers Australia welcomes the release of the National Carer Strategy

Carers Australia welcomes the release of the National Carer Strategy today by the Australian Government.

Carers Australia President, Tim Moore, said the Strategy is evidence of the Government's long term commitment to carers, who make an enormous contribution to the Australian community, often unseen and involving considerable personal commitment.

Carers Australia fully supports the Strategy's vision that carers be valued and respected by society; and that they have rights, choices, opportunities and capabilities to participate in the economic, social and community life available to other Australians.

Mr Moore acknowledged the Government's strong consultation with carers to develop the Strategy's direction. Carers Australia participated in this process and in November and December 2010, held workshops with 300 carers in 12 sites around the country to get their views on the Carer Strategy discussion paper and its coverage of key issues and challenges. The information obtained from these carers was then used to assist in the development of the National Carer Strategy.

A strong message from carers was the need for a strategy which would make tangible differences to their lives. 'There is potential for the Strategy to do this, but we are only at the beginning of a long journey,' said Mr Moore. 'What is required in the months and years ahead are the clear articulation of initiatives including the setting of measurable outcomes and clear time frames. Only in this way can we ensure that the lives of Australia's 2.6 million carers will be improved.

Carers Australia welcomes the plan to have progress in the Strategy's six priority areas reported annually to COAG. A similar commitment from State and Territory Governments would be highly desirable.

Expenditure within the Strategy is \$60 million. Mr Moore said 'These expenditure measures are broadly supported and assist carers.' He noted that of this total amount \$42.6 million relates to changed eligibility conditions for Carer Allowance. Changes to Carer Allowance assessment and reviews from July 2009 made the carers of children with diabetes aged between 10 and 16 years ineligible. 'Following a recent review, that decision has been rightly reversed and is welcomed by Carers Australia,' said Mr Moore.

Mr Moore also said that carers and their families have a very large stake in the issues canvassed in the two Productivity Commission reports currently before Government, *Disability Care and Support* and *Caring for Older Australians*.

Carers Australia looks forward to working cooperatively with the Government on these two reports as well as on the further development and implementation of the National Carer Strategy.

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