



**LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION  
THE HON. TONY ABBOTT MHR  
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR WARRINGAH**

---

1 November 2011

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE HON. TONY ABBOTT MHR  
REMARKS AT CARERS AUSTRALIA MORNING TEA,  
CANBERRA**

E&OE.....

It's great to be here. I want to thank all of you for coming out today and I guess I should be grateful as we all should be for the glorious spring sunshine here in Canberra that makes it pleasant to be outside.

I'm here to first of all salute the work that Carers Australia does; second, to acknowledge the heroism of the carers of our country; and third to make a modest announcement which I hope will be of benefit to Carers Australia and ultimately to everyone who is a carer and all the people who are being helped by carers.

I think that it's very important that we have a strong and effective voice for the carers of our country. There are lots of policy issues which impact on carers and it's important that they are well represented and Carers Australia has certainly been a strong and effective voice on this very important issue.

The carers of Australia are often the unsung heroes of our society. We have millions of them because we have about four million people with a disability one way or another and nearly every person with a disability has a carer. Those people are expressing the love that is so important that each of us need and that each of us should try to give as much as we can, particularly when people most need our help. It's very important that government do what it can but in the end what we need are individuals looking after other individuals – family members, friends, neighbours. The commitment that people make to others is frankly the glue which holds our society together and no one symbolises, represents and personifies that better than the carers of our country.

Finally, let me just say that every year for the last 14 years I've done this thing called Pollie Pedal. It's a long distance charity bike ride with my parliamentary colleagues and friends and associates. We've raised money for a wide range of charities over the years. We started off with Youth Insearch, a charity in western Sydney, then we raised money for the Paralympic team in 2000, then we raised money for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, for Ronald McDonald House. We've spent quite a few years raising money for medical research at Westmead Hospital and the last three years we've been raising money for the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health and I'm delighted that Ara and Tim have agreed that in 2012 the beneficiary of Pollie Pedal will be Carers Australia.

So, that's about a quarter-of-a-million dollars, I hope, that will go to Carers Australia as a result of some politicians getting on their bikes and riding a long distance for charity. I guess it's nice to think that able-bodied people are helping out in this particular way. I certainly think it's very important that we raise awareness of disability, we raise awareness of caring and making fit people be more conscious of those who are not so blessed I think is quite important.

So, I'm very pleased that Carers Australia have agreed to be the beneficiary. I'm hoping that along the route from Geelong to Canberra we will be able to meet with carers and those who they're caring for. I think it's important that we do that. I also hope after further discussion with Tim and with Ara to have a specific project that that money will be dedicated to and so far our discussions are focusing on better ways of trying to integrate carers with one another because there are often issues of isolation, of alienation, of loneliness amongst carers and if we can do something to try to break down that, well, that is obviously a very good thing.

So ladies and gentlemen, thank you so much for having me here today. I look forward to getting to meet you and I'm most of all just thrilled that Pollie Pedal 2012 has such a good beneficiary.

Thank you.

[ends]