

Media Release



30 October 2009

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.

Who Cares...? government response to carers misses the mark

Carers across Australia are asking does the Australian Government care? after a lacklustre response from government to the report of the House of Representatives Committee's Inquiry into Better Support for Carers.

"The government had the potential to make a bold statement in support of the vital role of Australia's 2.6 million unpaid family carers, however their underwhelming response has missed the mark." said Carers Australia CEO, Joan Hughes.

"Carers have been very patient in allowing the government the amount of time it has taken to respond to the *Who Cares...?* report but have been short-changed on delivery day."

Carers Australia welcomes the number of positive commitments from government made in the report, including the establishment of a cross-departmental forum to coordinate legislation, programs and services, for carers, and also the suggestion of further investigation into several promising support strategies.

However, Carers Australia is particularly disappointed that the government has not supported several important strategies including

- the right for all carers to request flexible work arrangements, allowing them to balance work and care
- adjustments to the restrictive '25 hour rule' that dictates the amount of hours carers receiving income support payments can devote to education and work
- increased, ongoing funding of the Young Carers Program

The diverse needs of vulnerable caring groups such as young carers, Indigenous carers and those in regional and remote Australia have also remained unaddressed.

"Carers Australia has consistently provided the Government with research and data during the time of the review. Hundreds of submissions were also made to this inquiry from carers themselves. However, it seems that this body of evidence has not been enough to spur the government into action" said Ms Hughes.

"The success of the government's response will depend on the content of the National Carer Recognition Framework announced last week. We anticipate working further with the government to ensure some of these issues are addressed by the framework."

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