

Media Release



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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 to issue election challenge

At the launch of National Carers Week the President of Carers Australia, Mr Ben Chodziesner will today challenge all parties to provide a detailed vision for the future for Australia's 2.6 million carers.

"Carers are getting frustrated" Mr Chodziesner warned. "They want more than just another pat on the back. They want a secure future just like everyone else."

The number of people estimated to have a direct interest in the issues that affect unpaid family carers has been estimated to be in excess of five million.

"That's more than a quarter of the population and enough to change the outcome in even the safest electorate" Mr Chodziesner said. "It would be incredibly risky for any politician to ignore a group of this size."

Mr Chodziesner will issue his challenge supported by the findings from the largest ever survey into the health and wellbeing of Australian Carers.

"What this report clearly shows is that the situation for carers is worse than anyone had imagined" Mr Chodziesner said. "Carers have the lowest wellbeing of any large group ever recorded by the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index."

The index measures subjective wellbeing based on seven key variables such as health and standard of living. The new research, released today, found carers scored dangerously low in all of them with more than a third being severely or extremely depressed and more than a third experiencing severe or extreme stress.

"This research backs up what we have been telling politicians for a long time" Mr Chodziesner said. "There is no simple solution. What is required is an approach that addresses the complexity of the issues and is flexible enough to cater for individual circumstances."

"Carers Week would be the ideal time for the parties to show they are serious about supporting carers by providing details of such an approach."

The details of Carers Australia's election platform are available at www.ifyoudontcare.com.au. The special report *The Wellbeing of Australians: Carer Health and Wellbeing* can be downloaded from www.carersaustralia.com.au. Mr Chodziesner and the report's author, Professor Bob Cummins will address the launch of Carers Week today at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra.

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