

Media Release



19 October 2007

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.

Major parties miss major election opportunity

The President of Carers Australia, Mr Ben Chodziesner, has been left unimpressed by the first week of official campaigning saying both major parties have missed a huge opportunity.

"Carers Week began with both leaders promising announcements for carers during the campaign" Mr Chodziesner said. "We would have thought this would have been the ideal time to make such an announcement, but sadly, so far we haven't seen anything of substance."

Mr Chodziesner had been hopeful that carers would receive something significant during the national awareness week for carers which ends on Saturday. However, he says carers are a resilient group and celebrations will continue with or without good news from the politicians. He also warned that Carers Australia's campaign will continue right up until polling day.

"We won't be letting up just because Carers Week is finishing" Mr Chodziesner warned. "We owe it to the 2.6 million carers out there to continue to apply pressure to all parties.

"Sooner or later, all parties will have to announce a substantial carer policy if they hope to win seats in this election."

A survey commissioned by the Taskforce on Care Costs (TOCC) found that nearly one in three voters would be a lot more likely to vote for a particular party if that party made a commitment to provide additional support to carers of the aged and people with a disability.

"Slowly but surely candidates are starting to realise how important carers are to their constituents and some are even staging public debates on these very issues." said Mr Chodziesner. "It's about time the leaders took notice of what is going on and elevated supporting carers to the level it deserves."

"Supporting carers ought to be a topic during Sunday's debate so the voters can decide for themselves which of the major parties is prepared to deliver what is needed."

The details of Carers Australia's election platform are available at www.ifyoudontcare.com.au.

14-20 October is Carers Week. Held right across Australia, Carers Week was established to promote and raise awareness of the valuable role that carers play in our community and to generate discussion about carer issues. More info is available at www.carersweek.com.au.

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