

Media Release



17 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.

It's time to eradicate carer poverty

The President of Carers Australia, Mr Ben Chodziesner has today called on all political parties to present a plan to eradicate carer poverty.

"There are carers in our community who are living off around \$200 per week below the federal minimum wage" Mr Chodziesner said. "Many of these people are effectively working 24/7 providing care and support to a family member or friend.

"In a prosperous nation like Australia, at a time we are debating \$34 billion dollar tax cuts, this is outrageous"

Mr Chodziesner had used the official launch of Carers Week on Monday to call on all parties to provide details of how they intend to secure the future of Australia's 2.6 million carers.

"Carers have limited employment opportunities because of the demands of caring" said Mr Chodziesner "Many are either unable to work or are restricted in the jobs they can take"

The release of findings on Monday from the largest ever survey into the health and wellbeing of Australian carers found that even those carers who were in fulltime employment had a household income that was \$7,200 lower than the national population.

"Carers are having to eat into their savings just to get by" said Mr Chodziesner. "When they reach retirement age, there is nothing left."

Carer superannuation is amongst the many recommendations in Carers Australia's election platform available at www.ifyoudontcare.com.au.

Today marks the twentieth anniversary of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

The special report *The Wellbeing of Australians: Carer Health and Wellbeing* released on Monday is available at www.carersaustralia.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.

Contacts: Anthony Watkins, 02 6122 9911 or 0412 666 412

Alison Kemmis, 02 6122 9917 or 0417 604 305