

# Media Release



8 May 2007

Carers Australia is the peak body working to improve the lives of carers through advocacy and services. It works with a network of carer associations in each state and territory to promote recognition of the important role that carers and their families have in the community and to assist carers to be better informed and resourced.

## Young carers completely ignored in budget

Carers Australia is very concerned that extra funding has not been made available to support young carers.

There are over 350,000 young people under the age of 26 who care for a family member or friend who is affected by illness, disability, drug or alcohol or mental health issues.

Since 2004-05 funding has been provided by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to operate a national project specifically designed to support young carers.

The program has been highly successful with demand for services increasing each month.

At the young carers national summit held in September last year, Minister Mal Brough promised those in attendance that if they could come up with ideas that would make a difference for young carers, he would take them up.

Carers Australia wrote to the Minister requesting an increase in funding for the young carer project in October last year. This was also recommended in our budget submission.

However, Carers Australia was informed by the Minister that no additional funds would be available to expand the project until it is reviewed. This process could leave the project without additional funding for more than two years.

"Young carers are severely disadvantaged and routinely miss out on the opportunities that most young Australians take for granted" Carers Australia President, Ben Chodziesner said. "Currently the Government spends only half a million dollars on this important national project that we know makes a substantial difference to the young carers who are able to access it."

"We were expecting a budget that would be family friendly. This should have included more support to young carers."

Carers Australia is the peak body for 2.6 million people providing care for family members or friends with a disability, mental illness, chronic condition or who are aged and frail. Carers Australia provides services and support to Australia's carers through the network of Carer Associations in each state and territory.

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