

Media Release

27 September 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.

Launch of new resource for schools today

Carers Australia will today launch the Young Carers Secondary School Resource at Darwin High School.

Carers Australia has developed the Young Carers Secondary School Resource to help teaching staff raise awareness of some of the needs of young carers, assist in identifying young carers and understand the impact of caring on the education of young people.

“This resource will help teachers identify and understand the needs of young carers so they can be better supported in education and achieve their potential” said CEO of Carers Australia Joan Hughes.

Young carers often face many difficulties, including not having enough time to complete homework, feeling worried or distracted at school and having enough time to be involved in school activities. This can sometimes be caused by teachers and peers not understanding what responsibilities these young people have to carry out at home.

Many young carers may not ask for help because they feel what they are doing is *normal* and they are often afraid of being seen as different from their peers. Mostly, they are not identified in the school environment until they reach crisis point. Many young people won't ask for help because they are afraid that someone will think they are not coping.

“Staff and teachers of secondary schools have great capacity to provide support, guidance and mentoring to young people, particularly those experiencing difficulties” said Ms Hughes.

When students discuss their caring role with staff, it is important that they receive understanding and support. It is also important to young carers and their families that schools have the appropriate procedures in place so that any negative impacts, such as bullying and harassment, can be addressed and reduced.

Minister for Community Services, Senator Nigel Scullion will present the resource to teaching staff at Darwin High School.

Young carers will share their caring stories at the launch and explain the importance of supporting young carers in schools.

This education resource has been produced for Australian secondary school teachers by Carers Australia as part of the Supporting Young Carers Project, which is funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Carers Australia CEO Joan Hughes, Carers NT CEO Garry Halliday and a small group of young carers are available for media comment.

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