

Media Release



11 May 2010

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.

Investment in 'invisible health workforce' remains out of sight

Despite substantial increased spending on health in the Federal Budget, the government has again failed to address the reality of how care is provided in Australia. Family carers remain unseen.

Carers Australia CEO Joan Hughes said, "Amid a range of healthcare workforce investment announcements, the government has not addressed the vital role of unpaid family carers.

"They have been identified by the National Health and Hospital Reform Commission as the 'invisible health workforce'¹ and yet the government has not included measures to better support them.

"There is no doubt that the care family carers provide keeps older Australians, those with disabilities, chronic illness or mental illness out of hospitals and institutional care."

Joan Hughes added "We are extremely disappointed that the measures outlined in our budget submission were not addressed.

"It would seem that there is an expectation that without increased support family carers will continue to provide care and support for family members. However we know that the number of carers may dwindle in the future as more people age and rely on family carers to participate in the paid workforce."

This is a budget without a clear strategy for better supporting those who support the health system to the tune of \$30.5 billion annually². Time is ticking and a care crisis is looming. A long-term sustainable health and aged care system is dependent on family carers.

The government should take their blinkers off and see the big picture. It is sad to think that policy makers and decision makers still do not understand the reality of care in this country.

For media inquiries contact Edward Allpress on 02 6122 9917 or 043 4085 194

¹ National Health and Hospital Reform Commission Final Report 2009

² Access Economics (2005) The Economic Value of Informal Care, prepared for carers Australia, Canberra