

Peter Primrose MLC

Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services
Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteering



Thursday, March 17, 2011

Coalition must back support for carers

The Minister for Ageing and Disability Services, Peter Primrose, today opened the Carers NSW Biennial Conference and acknowledged the work of the State's 750,000 carers in providing care and support to family members and friends.

Mr Primrose said that Labor had demonstrated its commitment to carers through a range of initiatives, including:

- **Stronger Together** – Many of the State's carers are caring for a loved one who has a disability. The NSW Government has committed to \$2 billion in new growth funding for the second five year phase of *Stronger Together*, taking the total extra funding over the 10 years to more than \$5 billion. This will increase service places by around 47,000 – including 4,500 respite places – over the next five years.
- **Increased Home and Community Care (HACC) funding** – the NSW and Commonwealth Labor governments will invest \$660 million in HACC services in 2010/11, an increase of more than \$38 million over 2009/10.
- **Dementia Day Care Centres** – 16 dementia day care centres are being built across NSW, with nine already opened. These centres will provide vital support to the more than 73,000 people in NSW living with dementia and their carers.
- **Ministerial Carers Advisory Council** – Labor set up the Carers Advisory Council to provide the Government with direct access to advice from carers and other experts on carer issues.
- **\$30 million to reduce cost of living pressures** – A re-elected Labor Government will fund a range of programs to reduce the cost of living for people with a disability and their carers, including \$12 million for the Home Oxygen Service.
- **\$98 million for mental health** – Labor's mental health policy includes a commitment of \$8 million in funding to the Family and Carer Mental Health Program – this funds NGOs to provide ongoing services and support to families and carers of those living with a mental illness.
- **The Carers (Recognition) Act 2010** – Labor passed this Act last May to provide strong and clear legislative recognition of carers in NSW.

"Labor has a strong record in supporting the role of carers," Mr Primrose said. "In contrast, the Coalition has not made one commitment of their own and they are yet to match or even comment on many of these important commitments.

"Barry O'Farrell needs to guarantee that funding for carers will continue if he wins Government at the election on March 26.

"If Mr O'Farrell is willing to sign a contract to voters pledging to 'fight the carbon tax' and 'lower taxes', why can't he provide the same level of guarantee to carers, people with a disability and the elderly that he won't cut services?"

"Carers have the right to know where the Coalition stands before they go to the polls."