



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CARERS CALL FOR URGENT REFORMS

Today at a public hearing of the Federal Inquiry into Better Support for Carers , Carers Victoria outlined ground-breaking reforms for the government across a broad range of interrelated policy areas including taxation, income support, superannuation, workplace legislation, services provision and social issues.

“The Inquiry must deliver outcomes that ensure caring is commonplace, manageable and valued in our society”, said Carers Victoria Chairman, Ben Chodziesner. “If we can address the complex social and systemic issues at play we can create a society in which taking up caring involves fewer risks and costs to individuals.”

Supporting the submission, carers attending the hearing said:

“Thirteen years ago I had to give up work to care for my wife who has a long term illness”, said Wyndham Vale carer, Martin Forty. “We have six children. I had to give up full time employment because there wasn’t enough workplace flexibility to enable me to combine my care responsibilities with my work. At the time I was earning over \$100,000 as a shift worker in a chemical plant. Although we have adapted well to the challenges of living on a Government pension, there is never enough money to set aside for the future. A Government funded superannuation scheme for people in my position would help us enormously and give us peace of mind as we get older.”

Says Terence Stroud, from Warragul, “I have been caring for our mother at home successfully for seventeen years after she had a stroke. Over those years I have been continually frustrated by the inflexibility and bureaucracy related to our paid support care package. Living in rural Victoria makes it especially difficult to get services that are accessible, affordable and flexible. I feel so very isolated.”

Helen Johnson of Traralgon says, “There is a lot of inequity in the system. I care for my 13 year old son who has severe multiple disabilities as well as my 79 year old father. As an older person my father has more options for funding and support services than my son whose needs are much greater. I’d like to see consistency across all levels of caring Australia-wide.”

The final outcome of the hearing will be announced early next year.

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Carers are people who care for family members and friends with disabilities, mental illness, chronic health issues, or who are frail aged.

There are over 700,000 family carers in Victoria. Carers Victoria promotes recognition of carers to governments, businesses and the wider public and also provides important services like counselling, advice, advocacy, education and training.

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*Carers Victoria is the statewide voice for family carers,
representing and providing support to carers in the community.*