



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CARERS LOOK FOR BUDGET COMMITMENT

With the release of the results of the Victorian Government's Inquiry into Supported Accommodation for Victorians with a Disability and/or Mental Illness, Carers Victoria looks forward to the Government making commitments to disability services and caring families when the 2010-11 budget is announced later this year.

The inquiry – conducted by the Family and Community Development Committee – found that while Victoria has led the move away from institutional care and into supported accommodation, not enough is being done to build the capacity of the service system – leaving Victorians with a disability or mental illness, and the people who care for them, at an even greater disadvantage.

Carers Victoria, the statewide service and support body for caring families, is calling on the Government to develop concrete targets and take action. For the 990,000 Victorians with a disability or mental illness there are nearly 700,000 unpaid family carers. Many are struggling to find secure, appropriate housing or adequate support for their family members and loved ones.

Carer's Victoria's Acting CEO, Janet Shaw, says, "Caring families would value the opportunity to work more closely with the Victorian Government to ensure their views are included in service reform. This Inquiry has delivered positive recommendations, but it must also deliver outcomes that ensure caring is manageable, sustainable and a shared community responsibility"

Carers Victoria also welcomes the recommendation for a central mental health services register for medium to long term accommodation/resident services. With no register currently in place for people with mental illness their needs cannot be effectively measured. Nor can the needs of Victoria's 3,024 ageing parent carers, most of whom are not registered on the Disability Services Register. With that number booming to 9,144 by 2023, the provision of secure housing and support for people with a disability or mental illness and their older carers is essential.

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Ms. Shaw continues, “These issues must be addressed expeditiously. Victoria cannot continue to operate a system in which 1292 people with a disability are registered as needing urgent accommodation on the Department of Human Services Disability Support Register, with only 220 places to be developed over the next 3 years. Service reform and firm funding commitments are vital to the wellbeing of Victorians with a disability or mental illness, and that of their carers.”

Carers Victoria represents and supports the 700,000 family carers across Victoria.

The organisation provides important services including counselling, advice, advocacy, education and training. They also promote recognition of carers to governments, businesses and the wider public.

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