



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday August 4, 2010

NEED WILLING WORKERS, TONY? LET'S GIVE CARERS A FAIR GO.

At 11:30am on Thursday August 12, Carers Victoria is launching *Ways to Work: a report on employment support for carers of adults with an intellectual disability* at The Queen Victoria Women's Centre in Melbourne.

Ways to Work explores the impact of caring on workforce participation, focusing on the experience of long-term carers, many of whom have no way of balancing work and care.

Our ageing population means Australia will be facing a skills shortage. Finding ways to help carers maintain careers and re-enter the workforce is just common sense. Currently, unable to balance work and caring responsibilities, many carers withdraw from paid work and rely on the Carer Payment to cover everyday bills, as well as the significant costs of caring – *Ways to Work's* early findings echo previous research indicating 53.6 per cent of carers receiving the Carer Payment would work, given the right support.

Carers Victoria CEO, Maria Bohan, says, "While many may lament the daily grind, being able to choose to participate in the workforce is an important right – carers should be able to make that choice. Carers can play a valuable part in the workforce, and supporting them can deliver bottom-line results to business. *Ways to Work* is just the start; more must be done to support carers balance the important work of caring with workforce participation"

A lack of workplace flexibility for carers in long-term care roles and the shortage of reliable, ongoing substitute care are enormous barriers to carers being able to engage in the workforce. Workforce exclusion results in a loss of professional skills and locks carers into a cycle of social exclusion. Moreover, it's detrimental to the Australian economy.

Ways to Work introduces 6 evidence-based recommendations for state and federal governments to address the issue of carer workforce participation. It is focused on generating positive outcomes for both caring families and Australia's future economic growth.

For further information:

Lisa Purnell
Promotions Officer
03 9248 9620
Lisa.Purnell@carersvictoria.org.au

Bernadette Garcia
Communications Manager
03 9396 9521
0417 385 403
Bernadette.Garcia@carersvictoria.org.au

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