

Having your say

Action Pack

for carers

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Having Your Say - Action Pack for Carers

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pack

For many years Carers Victoria has been advocating for carers as a group. We have seen a great deal of change over this time and our commitment to continue lobbying for improved outcomes for carers remains strong. However these changes can seem slow for carers requiring urgent and immediate change to their own situation.

By introducing this Action Pack we wish to also acknowledge the powerful influence that individuals can have on the government, community and services and to encourage carers to take action when the system has let them down.

Many people feel that it is too difficult, on an individual level, to improve the recognition and support that they feel they deserve. Even finding the time and energy to write a letter or contact the media can be difficult for people with caring responsibilities.

This pack is designed to make that process less daunting. It provides you with information and practical advice so that you can raise your concerns with the media, politicians and services. It is applicable for all family carers and other community members who see the need for change. In using this pack you may decide to enlist the help of your friends, family or other carers or become a member of Carers Victoria.

When using this pack we urge you to consider the following:

- What is wrong with the current situation?
- How could things be improved?
- What do you want to see happen?
- How much time and energy do you have available?
- What is the best way to communicate your concerns?

Carers Victoria first developed this pack in 2000 following wide consultation with over 350 carers, the Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre Southern Region and Carers Choice (Grampians). Carers NSW has adapted this Action Pack for their own use – this revised Pack includes some additional content made available by them. Thank you to those carers who participated in the discussions. Without your contribution, enthusiasm and passion, this pack would never have existed. We also thank you for reminding us to persevere and that all action no matter how small can have a result.

In closing, I invite and encourage you to become a member of Carers Victoria if you have not already done so. Membership is now free to carers and former carers and is a great way to keep up-to-date with the progress we and other carers are making on the issues that concern you. It is also a good way of demonstrating our strength in numbers. Join today! I look forward to welcoming you.

Maria Bohan

Maria Bohan
Chief Executive Officer
Carers Victoria
April 2006

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Working with the media

To get your story in the media you need to make a journalist see that your story is "news".

Make a list of your three major points before the interview and repeat them frequently.

People usually contact the media to:

- Raise awareness in the community about a particular issue.
- Influence or comment on organisations or individuals.
- Publicise an event.

For assistance in contacting the media call **Carers Victoria** on **1800 242 636**.

What is "news"?

The media reports items, which are current, informative or entertaining. These items are "news". Getting your story in the media means making a journalist see that your story is "news". Here are some different ways carer stories can be "news":

- **Reactive stories.** This is when carers are already in the news. For example, if the government cut the Carer Payment, the media would approach carers directly.
- **Piggyback stories.** This is when carers take advantage of existing news events. For example, if a famous person dies after a long illness, carers could ring up a talk back show and explain what long term caring is like.
- **Proactive stories.** If no "real" news has occurred, carers can make their own news. A perfect example is Carers Week. It has been organised to recognise carers and generate publicity. It provides the media with a reason to write about carers. Other examples include community arts projects and demonstrations.

How to get in the news

Most people contact the media with a media release or letter. These should be brief and explain:

- **what** you have to say
- **why** you are saying it, and
- **where** you can be contacted.

Providing contact details, including an **after hours number** is important.

A sample letter and media release are contained in this pack.

Telephoning journalists directly is also an effective way of getting in the media.

It is important to be aware of the different media deadlines:

- **Press** - late in the day for a daily morning newspaper.
- **Radio** - news is broadcast throughout the day. Morning news is the most important because it has the most listeners. Interviews may be done "live to air", but are usually done about 15 minutes before each bulletin.
- **TV** - unless there is a major incident, interviews and recordings will be completed by 2.00pm for the evening news.
- **Magazines** - getting a story covered can take from a few weeks up to six months. Ideally allow four months to try and get your story in a magazine.

Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor are an important way for you to voice your opinion, correct an inaccurate article or raise awareness about an issue. A sample letter to an editor is in this pack.

Working with the

media continued...

Think about the questions you are likely to be asked and how to respond to these questions to make your key points.

Politicians and policy makers closely monitor talk-back radio. You can get involved by calling in and expressing your concerns.

The interview - Radio, TV or Press

Most media will only give you a few seconds or a few lines to communicate your message. Make a list of your three major points before the interview and repeat them frequently. Try to think of a "call to action", so listeners will know what to do next.

You may like to promote **Carers Victoria** on **1800 242 636**, or ask listeners to write to their local politician. Remember:

- Think about the questions you are likely to be asked and how to respond to these questions to make your key points.
- Ask the journalist how long you will be interviewed for; who else will be interviewed and the 'angle' of the story.
- You are the expert on caring and are in control of the interview.
- Do not use jargon or acronyms that most people would not know, such as "ACAT", "HACC" etc.
- Do not be offended or discouraged if your story is dropped at the last minute. It may be included the next time.
- **Nothing is off the record.** Do not tell the media anything you would not wish to make public.
- If appearing on television, wear neat plain clothing. Do not wear red or patterned fabric, dark sunglasses or dangly earrings. Keep eye contact with the reporter and do not look at the camera.

Talk-back radio

Politicians and policy makers closely monitor talk-back radio. You can get involved by calling in and expressing your concerns.

You will only get a short time to talk - from about 30 seconds to 2 minutes, so you will need to be prepared. Remember:

- Familiarise yourself with the types of callers on the show, and the show's style.
- Prepare your key message in advance.
- Expect long delays before you get put on air.
- Increase your chance of getting on air by being polite and open when questioned by the operator. your concerns.

If you do not feel confident enough to speak on live radio you may still be able to express your concerns. For example on ABC 774 you can now SMS your message and the number is 19 774 774.

Like to get more involved?

Carers Victoria's Speakers Bank is a database of carers who are willing to share their stories and experiences with the community in order to raise awareness of the needs and issues facing carers.

Speakers share their stories in a range of ways. They may speak to radio, print or TV journalists, or to students, service groups, or carer groups. They may choose to share their story in ways that do not involve public speaking, such as writing an article for Carers Victoria's newsletter, speaking to Carers Victoria staff about issues, etc.

Carers Victoria provides a series of education workshops for carers who volunteer as speakers, covering areas such as: working with the media, presentation skills and advocacy.

To find out more about Speakers Bank contact Carers Victoria on 03 9396 9500, email cav@carersvic.org.au or visit our website www.carersvic.org.au

Sample media

release

This example of a media release, concerns a visit to a politician. You could use a media release for an event you are planning or attending or a dramatic incident instead. Remember to make your release current and local.

Carers Victoria can assist you to write your media release and provide a list of your local media.

Include a logo for your group in here. If you don't have a logo, type your name in a strong font.

Write "Media Release" and date it. Write either "For Immediate Release", or "Embargoed until ... (date and time)" so that the release will be printed at the appropriate time. Then add a short, catchy title about 5 words long.

Make your strongest point in the first paragraph and one sentence per line for the rest of the release.

Use quotes from your spokesperson containing your key messages, which the media can use directly.

Use wide margins and double-spacing in the media release so that it is easy to read.

carer name or carer group name / logo

Address
Telephone
Date

Media Release - Embargoed until 5.00pm 11/6/2006

Warembungle Carers Demand a Break

Today the Warembungle Carers Group is meeting with the local member Mr Sandy Hannon to raise the importance of increasing respite funding for carers.

Ms Larencia Marks, a group member who cares for her 33 year old son Mick says, "without more respite beds carers will continue to provide 24 hour care, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year without a break. It is unreasonable to expect any person to cope with this. Politicians get breaks, so should carers".

"I want to see the state and federal government make a commitment to more respite beds in Warembungle, and more respite services in the region", says Ms Marks.

"Our group meets regularly to provide support, friendship and share information, and we all need more respite options urgently", says Ms Marks.

The Warembungle Carers Group meets on Monday nights and welcomes newcomers. Contact Larencia on 03 9454 3453. Carers needing support or information on their local carer groups can call Carers Victoria on 1800 242 636.

For more information, photos or to arrange an interview contact Ms Larencia Marks 03 1234 5678 or Ms Annie Wilcox on 03 1234 5678 (all hours).

Keep the release to 1 page only. If you must include additional information, attach it to a "fact sheet" on a separate page.

End the release with information about what carers can do next, and contact details including after hours numbers for at least two people.

Sample letter to editor

You may wish to use the sample letter below as a guide when writing your letter to the editor of a newspaper. Keep the letter personal and relevant to your local area.

Carers Victoria can assist you to write your letter and provide a list of your local media contacts.

Journalists like hearing stories about 'real' people and events.

Introduce yourself in the first paragraph. Be personal and use names. For example, if you recently met a politician mention them. Name any local services to show the editor that your story has local importance.

Try to link your letter to a recent event or article. If possible add the name of your local service.

Make sure your letter is clear and easy to read. Keep it to 500 words or less.

You may like to invite the editor to follow up the story. Provide a number you can be contacted on at all times.

carer name or carer group name / logo

Address
Telephone
Date

Dear Editor

I am 78 years old and have cared for my husband for the last 4 years. I feed, bathe, wash and dress him. Without essential services like respite and garden maintenance, provided by local services, we would not be able to survive.

Today I received a letter from Woop Woop Council announcing that from next month garden maintenance will cease. I am devastated. I look out at our garden and wonder how I can keep it in order.

I also received the latest edition of your publication. It contained an advertisement from the federal government saying that it is wonderful to be older, and that it is important for older people to feel valued.

This is ironic! As an "older" carer I need government (local, state and federal) to make me feel valued by giving me the services I need. I need a break ! Not to be told that I have to work harder.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Blow

PS: If you would like to pursue this further please contact me on 03 1234 5678.

Send the letter to a wide range of newspapers to increase your chances of getting printed. If unsuccessful, try ringing the editor and asking why.

Use an e-mail or fax if your message is urgent, but remember to follow up with a telephone call or letter.

Influencing politicians

Meeting politicians

- 1 **Prepare by writing your main arguments down. Use a personal angle if possible. If working with a group, agree on your goals before your meeting.**
- 2 **Know the politician's stance on your issue.**
- 3 **In the meeting be assertive, but not aggressive. Remember that politicians are responsible for representing your rights and are accountable to you.**
- 4 **Press for a commitment. Ask the politician to clarify responses and agree on a process for follow up i.e. who will contact who and in what way.**
- 5 **Give the politician a one page summary sheet.**
- 6 **Write a follow up letter to the politician and staff thanking them for their time.**
- 7 **Stay in contact, even if nothing comes out of the meeting.**

Adapted from: 1) Duffy, B. & PIAC. (1996). Working the System: A Guide for Citizens, Consumers and Communities. Sydney, Pluto Press. 2) Windshuttle, K & Elliot E. (1994) Researching and communicating Communication: Skills from the Information Age, Sydney, McGraw Hill.

You can influence state and federal politicians and local councillors so they will represent your concerns in the political arena.

You may not be aware of it, but you are an expert in influencing people. In fact, you probably do it all the time. Perhaps you are influencing services to better support you, or influencing the person you care for to eat, drink or take medication. Influencing is part of every carer's routine.

Who to influence

Even though you elect politicians they may not share your views on all issues.

Most politicians belong to a political party, but are elected to represent your interests. You may be surprised to notice that a politician can sometimes put the attitudes of their party aside and focus on the issue instead.

It's often difficult to know which politician to influence. You need to identify the:

- **Level of government** - There are 3 levels of government in Australia, federal, state/territory and local. Different levels of government are responsible for governing and administering different matters. For example, generally speaking, issues like residential aged care and social security payments are a federal matter, while issues like health are a state matter. Local government is responsible for issues like community infrastructure and safety and security in the local area.
- **Appropriate politician** - Politicians have a "portfolio", which indicates the tasks they are involved in. You can access information about the Australian (federal), State/Territory and Local Governments through the website <http://www.gov.au> including a description of each politician's portfolio and their official contact details.

Ways to influence politicians

Write a letter - This is a very effective way of representing your concerns to politicians. Enlist the help of friends, or members of your carer group, to write similar letters as politicians will usually see a letter signed by many people as one letter. A sample letter to a politician can be found in this pack.

Request a meeting - Politicians are obliged to give you a personal interview. When visiting your local MP consider having another person accompany you; perhaps a friend or a member of your carer group. You can support each other. Most appointments will be short, about 15 minutes. Initially your request may be dealt with by a staff member in the office of the politician you have contacted.

Other avenues

- 1 Ask the **politician to raise your concerns** either at a local council meeting, in parliament or at the party's decision making forums. This ensures it gets a public 'airing' and is put on the public record.
- 2 **Table a petition.** Petitions are not very effective on their own as the government does not **have** to respond. The presentation and wording also need to conform to certain rules. Phone the clerk at the parliament where you intend to submit the petition for the specific requirements. Consider involving the media.
- 3 **Speak to Ministers.** They have more influence over government policy than backbenchers.
- 4 **Make yourself known to ministerial staff** including the secretaries and media advisors. They often have important inside information on general policy matters or the opinions of the relevant politicians.

Sample letter to politician

You may wish to use the sample letter below as a guide when writing your letter to a politician. **Carers Victoria** can assist you to write your letter, and provide contact details for your local member.

Write your or your group's name and address. Include a logo for your group. If you don't have a logo, write your name in a strong font.

carer name or carer group name / logo

Address
Telephone
Date

Politician's Name
Address

Begin by stating your reason for writing. Be specific and courteous.

Dear Mr. Ashley

Urgent request for mental health support

Use your own words to say how you feel and how the current situation affects you or members of your group. Stick to one issue, keep it concise and personal.

My name is Jane Miller and I need help. I feel like I am on a 'roller coaster'. I am caring for my husband with schizophrenia. He is 35 and I am 32 years old. I have been caring for him for the last 5 years and am now utterly and totally exhausted. I don't think I can go on any more. His family no longer visit us and, as my family live in Queensland, I am utterly alone.

End with a specific request e.g. suggest a meeting with the politician to discuss the concerns you have raised.

I love him dearly, and want to continue to care for him but I need more help. Because of his illness my husband goes through phases of violence and aggression. I live in Woop Woop, with my nearest hospital 30km away. The crisis assessment team no longer operate there. I am terrified about what will happen when his anger becomes so intense that I fear for both my life and his. Will there be an emergency crisis assessment team available near me when I need them?

Can you please help? It is vital for my health and safety that there is a crisis assessment team nearby that I can turn to for assistance.

Use your name or if appropriate sign on behalf of your carer group.

I would like to arrange a time to meet with you to discuss this further. There are other carers in my carer group who share my concerns on this issue. They would also welcome the opportunity to attend this meeting. I eagerly await your response. Please contact me on 03 1234 5678.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Miller

Letters should ideally be typed, but can be handwritten.

Consider sending the letter by courier or registered post as proof of delivery. Keep a copy of the letter.

Use an e-mail or fax if your message is urgent, but remember these have varying success and should be followed up by a telephone call or letter.

complaints

As a carer you probably use many services for yourself and the person(s) you care for.

There are many ways you can help improve a service, such as through verbal feedback, attending consumer committees etc. You can also make a complaint. Good services will welcome complaints so they can improve the way they do things.

Your rights and complaints

As a service user you have rights and responsibilities. Check with the service for a full list of your rights and responsibilities. Some rights related to complaints include the right:

- To complain about any aspect of a service.
- To be provided with information on how you can complain.
- To have your complaint dealt with fairly and promptly.
- To be informed of the outcome of your complaint.

Reasons you may complain

If you feel you have the right to complain it is important to respond as quickly as possible. Do not feel tempted to "put up" with your dissatisfaction for fear of losing the service.

You may complain because:

- You have received poor quality service.
- You have been treated unfairly or inappropriately by a worker, service or government department.
- A service or government department has been unhelpful.
- You have been discriminated against on the basis of your religion, culture, gender, marital status, geographical location or ability to pay.
- You were refused a service without an explanation.
- You refused a service in the past and believe that this is now being 'held' against you.

- You had to wait for the service and were not informed of the need to wait.
- You did not get what you thought you had paid for or what was in your service agreement.

What you might expect

- An apology
- A reduction in fees or a refund
- Another service
- Service improvement
- Compensation.

Types of complaints

- **Formal.** This is a complaint that follows a procedure, either within the service or by an independent body (see 'Useful contacts'). It is usually in writing and given to a person in a position of authority.
- **Informal.** This is a complaint that is "off the record". It is not governed by any set procedures. For example, if your home care worker did something you were not happy with you may request that they not do the same in future.

When to use a formal or informal complaint

It depends on the situation. If someone made a simple error or could do things better, then an informal complaint will suffice. However, if the situation does not improve you may decide to make a formal complaint.

Sometimes it is best to make a formal complaint, for example when:

- You feel intimidated by the person and feel they have power or will not listen.
- The complaint is serious.
- You feel things will only change if you make a formal complaint.

Know your rights. As a consumer you are entitled to a copy of your rights and responsibilities in the services you use.

complaints continued...

Carers Victoria has an extensive list of politicians. Contact 1800 242 636 . Alternatively, check the white pages under 'Parliament of Victoria' and 'Commonwealth Parliament Offices'.

Carers Victoria's library collection includes a wide range of resources on carer issues, including a range of resources around self-advocacy. To find out more contact our library on 03 9396 9500.

Who to complain to

You can complain to a number of people within a service including the coordinator of the program, or director of the service. Deciding on who to complain to depends on how serious the complaint is and who is in the best position to respond to your complaint.

If you are complaining about a service internally you may also have the right to complain to an independent body. You may even decide to complain about the service to your local Member of Parliament.

Complaints path

- 1 If you have concerns about a service or worker, speak to the worker directly expressing how you feel. Most times problems can be resolved at this level. Document your concerns e.g. when you spoke to the worker and what you spoke about.
- 2 If the situation does not improve and you still have concerns speak to the service manager or coordinator.
- 3 If the situation still does not improve write to the head office of the service.
- 4 If you are still not satisfied you can make an appointment with your local MP or councillor.

Adapted from Through the maze (1999). 3rd edition Melbourne, Association for Children with a Disability.

Useful contacts

- State or Commonwealth Ombudsman for complaints about government departments and authorities. 03 9613 6222 (State) and 03 9654 7355 or 1300 362 072 for country callers (Commonwealth)
- Office of the Public Advocate for complaints about services for people with disabilities. 03 9603 9500
- Equal Opportunity Commission for complaints about discrimination. 03 9281 7100, 1800 134 142 (country callers only)
- Health Services Commissioner for complaints about health services. 03 8601 5200 or 1800 136 066 for country callers.

Victoria has a wide range of advocacy services which specialise in representing various concerns. If you are unsure about who to approach contact Carers Victoria on 1800 242 636.

Adapted from Villamanta Legal Service, How to Make a Complaint Fact sheet.

Asserting yourself

Carers Victoria aims to improve the quality of life of carers through our education services. The following programs may help you to advocate for yourself :

- **Having your say**™ This session aims to encourage carers to represent their concerns and provides information on key principles and techniques for effective self-advocacy.
- **Assertiveness for Carers**™ This is a four session program that offers carers tools for improving self-esteem and assertiveness in the caring role.

To find out more about our carer education programs contact Carers Victoria on 1800 242 636, email cav@carersvic.org.au or visit our website www.carersvic.org.au

Sample letter of complaint

You may wish to use the sample letter below as a guide when writing your letter of complaint. Carers Victoria can assist you to write your letter.

Information to include in a complaint

Include a description of what you are complaining about with details of:

• The time or date(s) of the event.

• Who said what or did what to whom.

• The people responsible.

• The effect of their actions.

• The effect on you and the person you care for.

• What you want done to rectify the problem and by when.

Remember to act quickly and stick to the facts. If you require more information contact Carers Victoria on 1800 242 636.

carer name or carer group name / logo

Address

Telephone

Date

Director of Service's Name

Address

Dear Ms Service Director

I am writing to complain about the removal of my respite service, and the way that the situation was handled.

Between March 1 and 4 I received three "occasions" of respite. I was very happy with the service provided. I was scheduled to receive another occasion of respite on March 7, but the worker simply did not show up.

I rang your service after waiting for the worker for an hour and was informed that nobody was being sent, as the previous worker had lodged a report stating that there were OH&S concerns in my home.

I was extremely upset at this news as nobody had informed me of this change of plan and I was unaware of any OH&S problem in my home. When I asked what I was supposed to do today, I was told that there was nothing your service could do.

I believe I should have been informed of the OH&S concerns as they presented so that I had the option of attempting to resolve it, rather than losing the service. I attempted to contact you, as the service director, but was confronted continually with an answering machine and you did not return my calls.

I have found this experience extremely stressful.

I would like a clear explanation of what the OH&S concerns are, an apology for the way I have been treated, and a commitment from the service that they will not pull planned respite from myself or other carers in the future without a sound, substantiated reason and advanced notification.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Carer

Active on the

Internet

The Internet allows you to communicate with the rest of the world.

The Internet is a global network of computers which is a powerful interactive information tool. It can assist you and your carer group in many ways.

Why use the Internet?

The Internet allows you to communicate concerns and discuss ideas and solutions to problems with people from around the world.

The Internet can be used to:

- Send and receive emails (electronic mail) from family, friends, politicians, media and services.
- Research illnesses, conditions and medication effects.
- Obtain government reports on a variety of issues.
- Respond to requests for submissions from government and policy makers.
- Establish contact with Internet (online) support groups (see Connected Carers).

If you want to raise awareness about a problem or bring about some change in a service you can use the Internet to enhance activities that you are already doing, such as meetings and forums.

If you don't have a computer:

Every library in Victoria provides free access to the Internet. You will need to call to book a time. Alternatively visit an Internet Cafe, TAFE College or University who provide public access to the Internet at an hourly rate.

You may be eligible for assistance under one of the low cost computer schemes operating in Victoria. Contact **Carers Victoria** on 1800 242 636 for more information about these schemes.

Carers Victoria's Carer Lounge has a computer with Internet access and low cost printing for use by our members (membership of Carers Victoria is free for carers).

Internet sites of interest

The Internet has many excellent sites (Internet addresses) which can provide you with information on dealing with the media and meeting politicians. Many services, local councils and government departments also have websites where you can get an overview of the services they offer.

The website for Carers Victoria is www.carersvic.org.au

For more information

For those interested in knowing more about the Internet there are many resources available from your local library.

Training

If you would like basic training on how to use a computer or the Internet, try your local library, neighbourhood house or TAFE. Most will charge a fee, but as a carer you maybe entitled to a concession.

Connected Carers

On-line carer communities are another avenue for support, information, discussion and social networks. Carers are often isolated, for geographical reasons or because of the responsibilities of caring. Through the "Connected Carers" project, carers can interact with other carers, invited guest speakers and Carers Victoria staff.

Carers who are interested in participating will receive free education and training on how to use the VICNET virtual community site. Training will be provided across the state in local neighbourhood houses or community centres. It is preferable that carers are familiar with computers and the Internet.

If you would like further information please download our brochure (above), call us on 03-9396-9500, or email connectedcarers@carersvic.org.au.

the facts

116,600 Victorians are primary carers. They play the key role in caring and assisting a person with care needs.

Carers are of all ages, but are most likely to be aged between 35 and 54.

This sheet provides information about carers that you may find useful in your contact with the media or politicians.

What is a carer?

A carer is someone who provides unpaid assistance for family members or friends with care needs.

They are parents, children, partners, other relatives and friends who assist with a variety of personal care, health care, transport, household and other activities.

How many carers are there?

More than **14% (690,000)**¹ of Victorians are unpaid carers.

They include **116,600**¹ Victorians who are identified as primary carers. They play the key role in caring and assist with communication, mobility and self-care.

More than **322,000**² Victorians with a severe or profound disability are assisted by family members or friends.

Of the **987,000**² people with a disability in Victoria, **64%** are under the age of **65**.

Who are carers?

Carers are as diverse as the Victorian population.

Carers are of all ages, but are most likely to be aged **35-54**.

Nearly **4%** of all carers are under the age of **18**³.

More than **24%** of people aged **75**³ years or older are carers.

Seventy one percent (**71%**) of all primary carers are women: this changes to **58%**⁴ female primary carers for those aged over **65**.

Fifty five percent (**55%**)⁵ of primary carers are reliant on a government pension or allowance as their main source of income.

51% of primary carers have a gross household income in the **two** lowest quintile levels.

Only **39%**⁵ of primary carers participate in the workforce.

About care situations

Forty seven percent (**47%**)⁶ of carers take on a caring role because they believe they can provide better care than available services.

Thirty seven percent (**37%**)⁶ of primary carers spend on average **40** hours or more per week providing care.

Key issues

Many people do not identify as carers, and so do not access information, services and supports.

Many carers and the people they care for are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and experience additional difficulties.

Compared to paid workers, carers are disadvantaged regarding health and safety, holidays, work, leisure and financial security.

The work of unpaid carers contributes enormously to the Australian economy. In 2005, the annual cost of replacing unpaid carers was estimated to be **\$30.5 billion**.⁷

It is anticipated that, in the coming decades, there will be a major decrease in the availability of carers proportional to those needing care.⁸

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2004) *Disability ageing and carers: summary of findings*, Vol 4430.0, table 28.

² Ibid., table 5.

³ Ibid., table 27.

⁴ Ibid., *Summary of findings*, page 11.

⁵ Ibid., table 29.

⁶ Ibid., *Summary of findings*, page 11.

⁷ Access Economics (2005) *The economic value of informal care: a report prepared for Carers Australia*.

⁸ NATSEM (2004) *Who's going to care? Informal care and an ageing population.: a report prepared for Carers Australia*.