



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### VICTORIAN OLDER CARERS ARE TIRED AND DESPERATE

Carers Victoria welcomes the release today of Anglicare's report on the needs of ageing parents who are caring for a son or daughter with a disability.

The research findings that older parent carers are exhausted after decades of caring for a son or daughter with a disability, and are experiencing social isolation and anxiety for the future is consistent with what is happening in Victoria.

Carers Victoria runs a program supporting ageing parent carers in Melbourne's west and many clients of this program are passionate about speaking out about their frustrations about limited support options and fears of an uncertain future for their sons and daughters.

The major concern for parents is 'what will happen to their son or daughter when they can no longer care?'

The government's response to their needs to date is typified by the comments of Telmo Languiller, the Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities. Speaking at a recent disability forum in Moonee Ponds, Mr Languiller said 'The government has supported every person whose carer has dropped dead.'

'Ageing parent carers will not be surprised or shocked by this comment,' said Maria Bohan, CEO of Carers Victoria. 'They have long felt ignored by government.'

'We have heard from ageing parent carers who have tried to engage with the Minister for Community Services only to be met with closed doors.'

'The next Victorian government urgently needs to invest in a range of models of housing and support, as well as programs to support ageing parent carers to make plans for the future.'

(See next page for facts on Ageing Parent Carers in Victoria)

**Media contact:** Bernadette Garcia | 0417 385 403 | [bernadette.garcia@carersvictoria.org.au](mailto:bernadette.garcia@carersvictoria.org.au)

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

## THE FACTS

- In Victoria it is estimated that there are 3024 ageing parent carers. Numbers are anticipated to increase to 4008 by 2013 and to 9144 by 2023 with the ageing of the baby boomers<sup>1</sup>.
- Ageing parents are likely to be outlived by their son or daughter.
- The rate of development of supported accommodation services (220 places in 3 years<sup>2</sup>) is too low for current need.
- The circumstances, health and well being of older parents are not routinely monitored. Changes in their needs can be sudden and hidden.
- Few ageing parent carers and their offspring are registered for housing on the Victorian Disability Support Register.
- Many older parents feel abandoned by governments after decades of providing care. They cannot retire.
- Services to support ageing parents and their families to develop emergency, long term and housing plans are inadequate.
- There is a need to ensure that reforms to the Guardianship and Administration Act ensure that ageing parents (in consultation with their son or daughter and families), can put in place arrangements for someone they know and trust to oversee the well being and affairs<sup>3</sup> of their offspring.

1 These indicative estimates are projected from the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2003) national data on estimated numbers of ageing parent carers who are over 65 and living with their disabled offspring. They have assumed an even distribution of parent ageing from the 2003 cohort of parent carers between 45 and 64, and divided this by 24% - Victoria's share of the population.

2 Arthur Rogers (2008) Presentation to the Family and Community Development Committee inquiry into supported accommodation for people with a disability or mental illness

3 Carers Victoria (2009). Submission to the review of the Guardianship and Administration Act.