

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, 16th October 2007



POLITICIANS SHOW THEIR SUPPORT FOR ACT FAMILY CARERS

Today, 16th October 2007, key politicians in the ACT electorate will attend the Carers Day Out at the National Gallery of Australia, to spend time with over 100 family Carers, and voters. The event is being held in celebration of Carers Week 2007.

Politicians in the ACT electorate attending to show their support for family Carers include Senator Gary Humphries, Annette Ellis MP and Senator Peter Conway. ACT Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope, will make a speech to attending Carers, in recognition of their contribution to the ACT community. He will be joined by other members of the ACT Legislative Assembly.

Carers ACT Chief Executive Officer, Dee McGrath, said

“Now that the Federal election has been called, it is important that politicians hear first hand the challenges of family Carers in the Territory. Carers ACT will be sharing some of the disturbing findings of the new Australian Unity research report on Carer wellbeing that was released today.”

The report, titled *The Wellbeing of Australians: Carer Health and Wellbeing*, showed the results of a study of around 4,000 carers. While the average score of personal wellbeing for the Australian population sits between 73 and 76, the average score for family Carers sits at 58.5 – considerably lower compared to other disadvantaged groups.

The study is based on the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index which measures how satisfied Australians are with their lives and life in Australia. The Index investigates satisfaction with economic, environmental and social conditions in Australia, as well as giving ongoing insights into our perceptions of individual wellbeing.

“These are astounding results and are solid confirmation of what we see in our clients, day after day. With the level of emotional, physical, mental and financial stress that many Carers are under, these results are not surprising”, said Dee McGrath.

There are over 43,000 Carers in the ACT with over 2.6 million Australia wide. Australian family Carers contribute services and care valued at over \$30 billion each year*. Without Carers, this cost would have to be covered by governments and the community.

Carers ACT is the only association to represent family Carers in the Territory, with a growing membership base of almost 2,000 family Carers. Carers ACT provides advocacy, quality information, resources, referrals, respite solutions, support groups, counselling and workshops to family Carers requesting support.

Carers are people who provide support to a family member or friend who has a disability, mental illness, chronic condition or who is frail aged.

*Source: Access Economics Pty Ltd. (2005) *The Economic Value of Informal Care*.

Photo and interview opportunities:

From 12noon Tuesday, 16th October 2007
James O Fairfax Theatre, the National Gallery of Australia, Parkes Place, Parkes

Interviews with Carers and Carers ACT staff can be arranged

Contact: Colleen Donohoe on 6296 9923 or 0417 318 584

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