

Media Release



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MIRIAM MARGOLYES GETS REAL WITH ACT FAMILY CARERS

Award winning British actress and former Carer Miriam Margolyes says that allowances paid to Carers in Australia are pitiful and governments are not doing enough to assist people in caring roles.

Miriam is best known for her film appearances in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (as Professor Sprout), Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo & Juliet* (in which she played the nurse), Martin Scorsese's *The Age of Innocence* (winning the Best Supporting Actress BAFTA for her performance) and *Little Dorrit* (winning the L.A. Critics' Circle Award for Best Supporting Actress).

On Wednesday, 21st November 2007, she shared her experiences as a carer of her parents with over 100 ACT family Carers at a luncheon at Rydges Lakeside.

Miriam helped care for her mother after she had a stroke at aged 63 and later cared for her elderly father. She says that her saving grace was the fact that she had enough money to get support with caring for her parents.

"People who are Carers give up their lives for the people that they love, and that is what is so terrifying and shocking and humbling. I would have had to give up my life and my career for my father but I was saved from that by money" said Miriam.

As a result of her caring role and as patron of the UK carers' charity Crossroads, Miriam has a very strong commitment to carers and the issues they face.

The local Carers who attended the luncheon were humbled by her frank and honest story, and her sharp wit filled the room with laughter throughout the afternoon. This was a special kind of respite for these largely hidden members of society.

"Carers are pushed to the back (in society). Carers are not vociferous because they are so busy looking after the people they are caring for, they haven't got time to tell people what they are going through" said Miriam.

Miriam was in Canberra for her one woman show *Dickens' Women*, which has been acclaimed around the world, with the West End season in London's Duke of York Theatre earning Miriam an Olivier Award nomination.

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

Miriam's story shows that the caring role can happen to anyone at anytime.

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