



**For Immediate Release
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FEDERAL VISION EXPOSES ACT GOVERNMENT'S MYOPIA

Carers ACT welcomes the Federal Budget announcement of additional direct support to Carers, including expansion of eligibility criteria for Carer Payment (child) and other support initiatives for caring families.

These announcements are a great start for the Rudd Government to live up to its election commitment to improve Carer health and wellbeing.

"The Rudd Government is listening to what's important to Carers by addressing some of the priority issues presented by Carers Australia and the network of Carers Associations," said Dee McGrath, CEO of Carers ACT – the peak body for family Carers in the ACT. *"The increased support to caring families who care for people with profound and severe disabilities will bring welcome relief."*

The Rudd Government's vision for Carers, now needs to be matched by the Stanhope Government. The ACT Government's sole focus on health system infrastructure is short-sighted because 95% of care is provided to older Australians within the home setting – care provided by family Carers.

Carers in the ACT alone, contribute enough unpaid work to save the ACT health system over \$524.6m every year. If Carers did not provide this care, the ACT Government would be unable to provide an equivalent quality or level of care.

"We call on the ACT Government to match the Federal vision and commitment to supporting Carers in the community, by investing in support services that will directly meet their needs. The Chief Minister does not seem to understand that Carer needs are different to those of people receiving care. Carers need support in their own right to sustain them in their caring role," Ms McGrath said.

New government policy with a Carer impact affects not only the 43,000 Carers already resident in the ACT; it also affects the people they care for and other family members. Many Carers experience disadvantage because of their caring responsibilities. The cost of providing care has been steadily increasing with the current economic climate, which creates additional stress on families.

Carers provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness or who are frail.

Carers ACT is the recognised and expert voice for carers, and a member of the National Network of Carers Associations. We are a non-profit association that relies on public and private sector support to fulfil its mission with and on behalf of Carers

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