

# Media Release



**For Immediate Release  
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## **ACT VOICES HEARD AT FEDERAL INQUIRY INTO CARING**

Voices of Carers from throughout the Australian Capital Territory are evident in today's report released by the Federal Government following the Inquiry into Better Support for Carers. *"We are very pleased to see that the Standing Committee has recognised the complexity of the issues faced by the 43,000 Carers in the ACT,"* said Annemarie Ashton, the Policy Advisor for Carers ACT. *"This report reflects the important contribution Carers make every day in providing essential care for family members who are unable to live independently due to disability or chronic illness."*

The report offers 50 recommendations: from promoting greater recognition for family Carers through awareness campaigns; to improving payments and tax reform to help offset the costs of care. *"Given the complexity of caring support needs, the additional pressure created by the Global Financial Crisis, and the ageing of the ACT population, we applaud the Committee for making recommendations which encompass the short, medium and the long term,"* said Ms Ashton.

The report calls for complementary legislation at both a national and territory level. The ACT Government has already promised a Charter of Rights for Carers during the 2008 ACT election campaign. Carers ACT hopes that future legislation builds on the important work of Carer recognition started by the ACT 'Caring for Carers' Policy. Legislation is critical for building a system of support which is responsive to families, and to better meet their needs for inclusion in the wider community.

The Federal Inquiry has recognised the strength of Carers as being experts on their own needs. The recommendations also include valuable continuation and expansion of Carer-led supports, including peer support and systemic advocacy. Greater involvement of Carers in health care and treatment of care-recipients is also supported.

The Committee heard evidence and received submissions from many ACT Carers. Carers ACT submission was based on consultation with over 280 Carers who were unable to write an individual submission. Carers ACT was especially pleased to note that the report contained many direct references to evidence from Carers ACT, including the importance of appropriate Carer legislation to underpin social reform, the complex needs of many families (such as those caring for someone with severe and profound disability or mental illness) and the need for solutions to address a 'whole of family' situation.

**ENDS**

**For more information contact: Annemarie Ashton on 0439 930 501. Interviews with Carers can be arranged on request.**