

Media Release



For Immediate Release
Friday 23 March 2007

NEW PROGRAM TO SUPPORT CARERS & ADDRESS SKILLS SHORTAGE IN ACT

On Monday 26th March, the new Minister for Ageing, the Honourable Christopher Pyne, will launch a highly innovative program to enable family Carers remain in the workforce, while they continue to care for a family member who is frail aged or has dementia.

One in eight Australians will be a Carer at some stage in their lifetime. There are over 43,000 Carers in the ACT, 75% of which are aged under 54 years and eligible for workforce participation. Only 52% of ACT primary Carers are employed.

In 2005, Australia's productivity loss resulting from Carers leaving the workforce to take up full time informal caring roles was estimated at \$4.9billion ("Economic Value of Informal Care," Access Economics, 2005). The number of Australians aged 65+ needing care is projected to increase by 160%, from 539,000 people in 2001 to 1,390,000 in 2031. ("Who's going to care? Informal care and an ageing population", NATSEM, 2005).

"The labour and skills shortages in the ACT continue to worsen. Family Carers continue to juggle increasingly demanding caring roles, full time work and other family roles. This program will be a welcome relief to family Carers as well as employers in our region. The range of support options now available through the program will enable more Carers to continue to work while they care for their loved one. It will also positively support employers in retaining skilled people in the workforce," said Dee McGrath, CEO, Carers ACT.

The Employed Carer Innovative Pilot (ECIP) is an initiative of the Australian Government's Department of Health and Ageing. The ACT programs are facilitated by Carers ACT, Baptist Community Services and Villaggio Sant' Antonio. The programs compliment each other and positively demonstrate how partnerships provide more effective, responsive and holistic support to Carers.

Baptist Community Care and Villaggio provide flexible day care programs – one designed for the frail aged and the other for dementia. Carers ACT provides a range of flexible support options for Carers whose cared for person can stay in the home. Carers ACT is also working with ACT employers to develop flexible work practices that will support the needs of the employed Carer in a way that business requirements can still be met. Carers ACT are working in partnership with the ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry to communicate the benefits of this program to employers in the ACT.

Event Details - Interview and Photo Opportunities

9am Monday, 26th March 2007

Daybreak Centre, Baptist Community Services, Carey Gardens, 11 Carnegie St. Red Hill

Interviews with Carers ACT CEO or an employed Carer can be arranged.

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