



Media Release Embargoed until Friday 16th November 2007

Unleashing the potential of working carers: New research

(Sydney) – 2.56 million people provide informal care to a person who is aged and/or has a disability, and this number is set to increase as the population ages. At the same time Australia is experiencing a tight labour market, and needs all hands on deck in order to sustain economic momentum.

Working carers already find it difficult to balance work and care, so is Australia prepared for the future? Brand new data collected by the Taskforce on Care Costs (TOCC) suggest not.

In its final report to be launched on 16 November 2007 – *The hidden face of Care* - TOCC has found that current Government services and workplace support for working carers is inadequate, leading to reduced levels of workforce participation.

"It is not in Australia's interests that 44% of working carers are currently working below their skill level to get some flexibility, and 1 in 4 has reduced their hours of work because of the high cost of care" says Juliet Bourke, Chair of TOCC. "Carers represent an under-utilised pool of resources that we cannot afford to ignore any longer".

"Getting the work/care mix right is not only an issue for now it is a critical issue for the future", says Bourke. TOCC found that 1 one in 3 working Australians (over 18) expect to care for an aged person or someone with a disability in the next years and see workplace flexibility as their key management strategy.

The report includes 10 key findings and 5 recommendations for change which focus on improving services and workplace flexibility. For example, TOCC recommends the introduction of Federal legislation to give employees a right to request reasonable flexible work practices.

About TOCC

TOCC is supported by over 45 high profile business and non-government organisations. TOCC was established in 2003 to investigate the relationship between work and the cost of care, and propose sustainable and fair solutions to give carers choice. TOCC has concluded that the work/care dynamic is a critical national issue and that strong leadership and immediate intervention is required to improve current gaps. For more information visit www.tocc.org.au.

Media Inquiries: Sean Brogan, Wilkinson Media, Ph: 0407 436 709 or 8001 8820.

3/332 Darling Street, Balmain NSW 2041

Juliet Bourke – TOCC Chair - 0414 426 939
Gabrielle Upton – TOCC Deputy Chair – 0407 267 958