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Australians show they care about the high cost of care

Launch of the Taskforce on Care Costs “Who Cares?” Campaign

Sydney 16 February 2007 – On Monday 19 February 2007 the Taskforce on Care Costs (TOCC) launches the “*Who Cares?*” campaign. The Campaign includes the release of Australia’s first Carer Affordability Index which shows that the cost of childcare has risen by 65% over the past 5 years, in comparison to a rise of 17% in net disposable household income.

“An increase in this index means real childcare costs are rising and childcare is becoming less affordable, relative to average household disposable income” said Saul Eslake, ANZ Chief Economist.

“The Index confirms that the cost of care is spiralling out of control” says Juliet Bourke, Chair TOCC. “Nearly half of all workers with young children (46%) feel that the cost of childcare is too high relative to their income, and the Index shows they are right” says Bourke. TOCC’s research shows that the 1 in 4 workers with caring responsibilities is at risk of leaving the workforce because of the high cost of care.

“The Taskforce keeps telling the Government and the Opposition the real picture, but unfortunately Treasury advisers are telling Government that care is affordable.”, says Bourke. “The time has come for the Australian public to send a message directly to the politicians that they care about the high cost of care, and want action.”

The Who Cares? campaign gives Australians a strong national voice on the impact of the cost of care (for children, elders and people with a disability) on workforce participation choices, and workable solutions. Through a dedicated website (www.tocc.org.au), TOCC is hosting an electronic summit on work and the cost of care. The website will include interviews with people on the street and an electronic postcard (or e-card) to enable Australians who care to lobby Government Ministers and the Opposition about solutions to the work/cost of care crisis.

Notes

About the Carer Affordability Indices

The *Who Cares?* campaign will also launch Australia’s first index to measure the affordability of care. The Index will include 3 separate time series - one for childcare, one for elder care and one for disability care. Developed by ANZ Economics, the Childcare Affordability Index profiles changes in the cost of childcare as a function of household disposable income starting from 1990. The Childcare Affordability Index shows that from December 2001 there has been a 50% increase in the cost of childcare relative to household income.

About TOCC

TOCC is supported by over 40 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/cost of care dynamic is a critical national and strong leadership, and immediate intervention, is required to improve the situation. For more information visit www.tocc.org.au

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