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***It's as plain as the nose on your face –
The cost of care will be an election decider.***

A Newspoll survey commissioned by the Taskforce on Care Costs (TOCC) shows that 87% of Australians believe the Federal Government should increase its financial support for carers (of children, the elderly or people with a disability) to help them take up or remain in paid employment.

TOCC's research shows that the high cost of care is putting at risk the continued workforce participation of 1.25 million Australian workers with caring responsibilities.

"The Newspoll results are just astounding. Business and the broader community recognise that Australia is in the grip of a work/cost of care crisis and TOCC's research shows that the cost of care is rising much faster than CPI. But what will it take before the Government shows it cares?" says Juliet Bourke, Chair of TOCC.

"The high cost of care is more than just a newspaper headline, it will be an election decider", says Bourke.

73% of Australians surveyed said that providing more support for those with caring responsibilities to help them take up or remain in paid employment is important to how they will vote at the next Federal election.

"The cost of care is the national leveller. No matter who you are, where you live or who you care for, the cost of care touches us all at some point in our lives" say Bourke.

The Newspoll results show the cost of care is important to voters for all political parties. 77% of Labor voters and 65% of Coalition voters say that the cost of care is important to their voting choice at the next Federal election.

"This is a strong message for the Government and Opposition. Australians are looking for leadership and firm financial commitments to address the high cost of care. Without this, the high cost of care will just continue to escalate," says Bourke.

- ENDS -

Case Study

Jennie and Anthony Bucco have three small children one of whom has muscular dystrophy. In January of this year Anthony felt he had no choice but to leave his job to help care for the children. For the Bucco family this was a cheaper alternative than hiring a full time nanny. The family is available for interview upon request.

About the Newspoll survey

On 16-18 March 2007 Newspoll administered a survey on behalf of TOCC. The survey asked 1204 Australians aged 18+ (i) whether the Federal Government should increase its financial support for carers to help them take up or remain in paid employment, and (ii) whether the issue of providing financial support is important to how they will vote at the next Federal election. A survey of 1204 represents the views of 15.8 million Australians.

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 found that 1 in 4 workers is likely to leave the workforce because of the cost of care. For more information visit www.tocc.org.au **Media Inquiries:** Sean Brogan, Wilkinson Media, Ph: 0407 436 709 or 8001 8820 or Taskforce Chair Juliet Bourke 0414 426 939