

MEDIA RELEASE
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Family carers provide vital link in country communities

Family carers living in country South Australia are in need of additional services to support them in their caring role, says Carers SA the key representative body for the State's 80,000 carers that live outside the metropolitan area.

As part of National Carers Awareness Week (**October 18 – 24**), Carers SA is calling for recognition and awareness of the needs of carers by country GPs and other health and community professionals. Family carers provide a vital link between local medical professionals and essential day to day support for the frail aged, people with disabilities and those with chronic physical or mental illnesses in country areas. They need to be better supported in this role.

"We need to make sure the health professionals and the general public not only recognise the important role of family carers, but take measures to support them. Action is needed to allow them to cope with their caring responsibilities and help them to manage the extra pressure caring can place on their own health and wellbeing", CEO Rosemary Warmington said.

"Considering family carers save the Federal and State Governments \$30.5 billion per annum (Access Economics 2005), which is the cost of the replacement care if it had to be purchased from formal service providers, better support is needed to protect the health and wellbeing of carers." she said.

Carers Week, with the theme "Anyone Anytime, Across Australia", highlights that caring takes place right across our nation. Carers living outside the metropolitan area represent 36 per cent of the State's 222,700 carers. Country carers often face additional challenges, such as limited access to services, transportation issues and isolation.

"It's the role of the broader community to work together to make sure that carers of all ages are recognised and supported through adequate country health services and access to carer support programs."

Dozens of events will roll out across the State for Carers Week to help celebrate and educate both carers and the general community of the caring role.

Carers SA provides support to all family carers including Aboriginal carers, young carers (aged up to 24) and carers from all cultural backgrounds. Call 1800 242 636

Carers Week 2009 is an initiative of Carers Australia and funded by the Australian Government.

For information on any of the activities occurring in your local area during Carers Awareness Week please call 1800 242 636 or visit www.carers-sa.asn.au

For further media information or interview contact Carers SA CEO Rosemary Warmington on 0427 524 018 or (08) 8291 5600