

# Media Release



10 April 2013

Carers Australia is the national peak body for carers. Our mission is an Australia that values and supports the contribution that carers make both to the people they care for and to the community as a whole.

## National Youth Week: a time to celebrate, listen and support young carers

National Youth Week is a time to recognise, support and celebrate the well over 300,000 young carers in Australia who help care in families where members are frail aged or who have an illness, a disability, mental illness, or an alcohol or other drug problem. Carers Australia will hold a special National Youth Week event for young carers at the Southbank Institute of Technology on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April at 10am.

“Young carers make a significant contribution to their families, to the people they care for and to the Australian community,” said Carers Australia President Dr Tim Moore.

Young carers often care by cleaning, cooking, getting their relative or friend around the house, helping with medicines, keeping them safe, showering or dressing. They may look after parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles other relatives or their own child; they may also look after friends.

“Often young carers are very proud of what they do, however, caring can affect a young person’s social life, education and job prospects when families are not adequately supported,” said Dr Moore.

“National Youth Week provides us with an opportunity to listen to the concerns and needs of young carers, so we can better support them, not only in their caring role, but in relation to their education, social participation and financial security.”

Levels of participation and attainment in education are generally lower among young carers when compared to other Australians<sup>i</sup>, with young carers aged 19-24 less likely to have completed Year 12 or an equivalent compared with non-carers of the same age.<sup>ii</sup>

“Young carers need support and flexibility so that they can achieve their educational goals and enjoy the same opportunities afforded to other young Australians,” said Dr Moore. “Young carers also need support to lessen the caring load. We need to ensure that people needing care are adequately assisted by the disability, mental health, aged care and health care systems so that young carers are not left to care alone.”

“Initiatives such as *Care Aware* have raised awareness about the existence and needs of young carers, particularly in relation to education. Now we need to act to ensure that young carers are getting the support that they need.”

**For media enquiries please contact Edward Allpress on (02) 6122 9921 or 0408 956 578**

<sup>i</sup> *Young carers in receipt of Carer Payment and Carer Allowance 2001 to 2006: characteristics, experiences and post-care outcomes* – J Rob Bray, Australian National University (2013)

<sup>ii</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008)