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## Widespread reform needed to support carers in the workplace

Carers NSW has welcomed a report released today by Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick that calls for widespread reform to support Australia's unpaid carers in the workforce.

Commissioner Broderick launched the *Investing in care: Recognising and valuing those who care* report in Sydney today, stating that the current superannuation, taxation and employment systems fail to recognise the invaluable personal and socio-economic contribution that carers make to the community.

"The failure of our superannuation and taxation systems, alone, to recognise this contribution and provide a value for this unpaid work means that carers – mostly women - who have had long and repeated absences from paid employment, find they have negligible retirement savings and indeed, often retire in poverty," Ms Broderick said. "Considering the contribution these people have made to our economy by undertaking this unpaid work, it is time we changed this outcome."

*Investing in care* proposes eleven areas of reform which aim to reduce the disadvantage carers experience and improve carers' capacity to enter and stay in the workforce. The proposed reforms include: strengthening anti-discrimination and carer recognition legislation; introduction of a Carer Card; expansion of the right to request flexible work arrangements; provision of additional carers leave; changing workplace culture to support carers; and reforming our system of income support and retirement saving.

Carers NSW CEO, Elena Katrakis said that the report provides the clearest evidence to date of how we as a nation can better support carers in the workplace.

"The ability of carers to work and care needs to be drastically improved. We know that the majority of primary carers are unable to work. For those carers who do work, it can be a struggle to balance work and their caring responsibilities."

"Our national and state governments have an important role to play in rectifying this situation, to ensure that carers, the people they support, employers and the economy can all benefit from the increased workforce participation of carers. This report provides a clear path for how we can move forward to become a nation that recognises and values the vital contribution of unpaid carers."

Commissioner Broderick is a keynote speaker at the Carers NSW 2013 Biennial Conference: *Caring Working Living* where she will be discussing the findings of the report and its implications for carers. Commissioner Broderick will be joined at the Conference by other

distinguished speakers, including leading academics Professor Luke Clements from Cardiff Law School and Professor Sue Yeandle from the University of Leeds.

Ms Katrakis said:

“The themes of this year’s conference are *Caring, Working and Living* to ensure that we look beyond the daily tasks associated with caring and take a broad view of the caring experience.”

“Carers do all the things that everybody else does. They work, they have relationships, they socialise, they go to school or university and it is important to ensure that they are supported in balancing these areas of their lives with their caring roles.”

The Commission’s report is available at:

[www.humanrights.gov.au/sex\\_discrimination/VUCW\\_australiaResearchPrj/index.htm](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/sex_discrimination/VUCW_australiaResearchPrj/index.htm)

For more information on Carers NSW 2013 Conference visit:

[www.carersnsw.org.au/conf2013](http://www.carersnsw.org.au/conf2013)

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