

For release Tuesday 18 September 2007

## Tasmanians join national call for a better life for stroke survivors

Tasmanians stroke survivors are joining other stroke survivors and carers around Australia calling on all governments for better services to improve their lives.

Tasmanian stroke survivors and their carers took part in a national survey to identify the difficulties they face after a stroke.

The Minister for Health and Human Services, Lara Giddings will launch the report of the survey, *Walk In Our Shoes* at Parliament House today (September 18 at 10:30am).

The report paints a bleak picture for stroke survivors who continue to struggle to regain their health after a stroke and have difficulties finding information to help them recover. Many suffer from social isolation and depression and nearly all fear they will have another stroke.

Dr Erin Lalor, CEO of the National Stroke Foundation says that better coordination of family, community and health care support is needed.

Dr Lalor says the report highlights that take-up of services considered valuable by stroke survivors and carers is limited and many services identified as valuable are hard to obtain or not available.

The number of stroke survivors in Australia equals the combined population of Hobart, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie.

“Over the next 10 years, nearly half a million Australians will suffer at least one stroke, so there will be many more stroke survivors living at home and looking for information and services to help with their recovery,” Dr Lalor says.

“Our research indicates that significant funds need to be devoted to improving the life of stroke survivors and carers.”

Dr Lalor said an initial costing indicates that a minimum of \$12 million over four years would be required nationally to begin the process of strategically linking services for stroke survivors and carers with existing health and community services and improving access to services identified by consumers as critical for recovery.

**For more information, copies of the report, or to interview Dr Lalor or a stroke survivor contact Brian Peck on 0437 515 505 or Nicola Edwards on 0416 800 790, 03 9670 1000.**