

28/06/08. DOB 10/03/1922.

To Community Secretary,  
Standing Committee on Family Community and Youth,

P.O. Box 6021  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House

Canberra.

ACT 2600.

Dear Secretary,

Yesterday I received word from Carers' Australia asking for submissions to be forwarded to you. Not much time, but I'll do my best. My role has been to care for my husband who developed schizophrenia some years after traumatic war service.

By this time we had four children. The eldest and youngest were autistic. There were no services or help available over 50 years ago, and I have never had any financial help.

My husband died in 1982, and my son died in 1983. My daughter, now 58 years old, has been in supported housing for two years. I am still caring for her emotionally, and helping her financially.

At 86 years of age, I now have serious health problems and, failing an act of Divine Intervention, will need a wheel chair in a nursing home in the near future. Possibly in some distant facility. I am scheduled for further surgery on July 30th 2008. I have no social life, except for visits from neighbours, because I am unable to leave my home except for health appointments.

The struggle to manage financially is an added burden. This week, transport, medication, and one specialist fee cost me \$140. I expect to be refunded \$30 for the specialist fee, but \$140 is more than I can afford out of my income.

My concern for my daughter's future is a very real stress.

My other two adult children have their lives and families in far distant localities. They have already had years of stress in their childhood and youth. However much I need support I know that they must live their lives without further stress on my account, even if they were prepared to help.

I will need more help than is available, due to funding restrictions, through Community Health. I have one hour a week of help. One week, house cleaning, and one week social support. I have meals on wheels, and cope with other home chores myself.

If a realistic approach were introduced for aids hired out to clients by Community Health, over the entire region, more funds would be available for practical help.

I pay \$10 a month for equipment hired, and in the course of years have paid many times the cost of everything I have ever had, but I have been "subsidised" thousands of dollars. If this "subsidy" is part of funding, then it amounts to a government disgrace. GET REAL. Check it. Correct it. And HELP PEOPLE.

I have paid probate and rates, care for my family, done more than 10 years of unpaid secretarial jobs, often two or three sentences served concurrently. I have been in and out of jail, working with the residents there, in addition to many other voluntary work experiences. Activism, riding for disabled, domestic violence, care etc.

When my husband died in 1982, I had to give up work with what is now community health to care for our artistic son.

At that time, I was thanked for my contribution, and told that through my years of working house to house, caring for people who would otherwise be in hospital that I had "saved the Health Service not thousands of dollars, but hundreds of thousands of dollars."

Now, I wonder, where do I go from here? Neighbourly care is so important. No one can ever put a dollar value on that.

May politicians never forget that,

yours sincerely

Nelva L.

(Nelva L.)