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Submission No. 1005

(Inq into better support for carers)

14/07/08

Secretary

Inquiry into Better Support for Carers

Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing & Gender
P.O. Box 6021

House of Representatives

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2000

Dear Secretary

This is a submission to the above committee.

My wife and I are parent carers for a disabled person who is now 80 years old. Things have changed a lot in those years but we think things are improving slowly.

Looking back, we would have been greatly assisted by early intervention by medical experts, social workers, financial planners, behaviour psychologists and family psychologists. We were neglected as a group and treated as though our disability was our fault.

We are more than bound by the common laws of society because of our responsibility. The special environment can be very destructive.

and is compounded by the uncertain future of care & responsibility.

When a person becomes disabled, even at birth, a map of their life could be drawn up early, so that all concerned have advanced knowledge of their responsibility, so carers and others do not lose their ability to cope with a life long problem.

The financial assistance would relate to the extraordinary expenses of services, and providing appropriate care in the absence of the original parents, the future.

My wife and I realise there is a limit to the type of services available. However, ~~as~~ in our case, our daughter with a mild intellectual disability, could be usefully employed in a state or state subsidised enterprise, where she shares a workplace with able people, not just herded into sheltered workshops, where a normal social support scene exists. There need not be any wage negotiation. She already receives a Centrelink pension.

She achieves a degree of independence but will need sympathetic assistance with some things such as finance, shopping, health, diet, and some social activity.

These people are always severely stressed which may reveal itself in psychiatric conditions, so a close watch is needed for this.

Relatives may be able to support some of these needs but there needs to be continuous, dedicated support from properly paid professional; qualified people.

We realise that the subject is complex and generalization is impossible. However we have covered just a few of the considerations that apply to everyone. We must also accept that this is a human situation and needs an appropriate response.

Thank you for the opportunity to express some opinions and look forward to your recommendations.

Peter + Carole