

A.O.C. 14/7/08

Submission No. 712
(Inq into better support for carers)24th June 2008

From Glennis

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth
PO Box 6021
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary

I wish to make a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth's Inquiry into Better Support for Carers.

As the prime Carer of an adult disabled son I face the following problems --

I am from New Zealand and now 69yrs old. My son is now 46yrs old. Therefore I have been caring for him for 46years. He has Downes Syndrome and very deaf. Because of the Social Security deal between NZ and Australia we do not qualify for any Carers Allowance or Bonus etc. I find this very hard as I am on a very low Age Pension (we are penalized because of my partner's wages which are not high anyway) WE have lived here 5 years and I find I am caring more and more for my son than ever before-he has lots of health issues and so do I. The fact that we actually live in Australia (not NZ) means the costs, difficulties we face here are so much more than in earlier years-where he was much more independent in a smaller city. Plus I feel that he has lost lots of earlier abilities/memory etc In the last month I have had to get him to two Hearing Clinics, Optician, Doctor, Podiatrist, and ongoing to Pathology labs as he has Haemochrometosis. Even though Medicare pays for most of these there is always the cost of petrol and effort for me as I am not well now. I feel very envious knowing that Australian born Carers will be receiving the Carers bonus and we wont. It would be of such a help with the extra caring involved nowadays.

I can't fully participate in social life because --

Of nowhere for my adult son to go near Frankston for a week or 2 so we could have a holiday.

I am financially struggling because of ... Not receiving a Carers Allowance/Bonus or Mobility Allowance.(see above)

I worry about my future because ... My health is deteriorating and I worry where my son will go if I died. We have only a small extended family both in NZ and Australia-none of whom could or would know how to

care for him.

The things that stress me the most about being a Carer are:

After 46 years of doing so, I am becoming more and more stressed taking full care of my 46 year old son. His deafness is a major problem in the family as he does not manage his hearing aid properly and is not as independent as he was in earlier years. He and I are at loggerheads continually which is very stressful for us both.

I think the Government can better help Carers by ...

We desperately need accommodation for our adult dependent children. I have just had a hip replacement and now find I have some heart problems that may need surgery soon-where will my son go for short or long term accommodation?

He needs to be in and around Frankston as he attends PAST each day and his Social life is based here. For us it has taken the last 5 years to find appropriate day care programmes and deal with Australian bureaucracy etc-so it would really affect my son if he was forced, in an emergency, into accommodation that was not in the Frankston area

Thank you for taking my views into consideration as part of the Committee's Inquiry. I look forward to reviewing any recommendations you make to improve life for Carers in Australia.

Yours sincerely

Glenis