

Committee Secretary
Inquiry into Better Support for Carers
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family,
Community, Housing and Youth
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

A.O.C. 2/7/08
Submission No. 443
(Inq into better support for carers)

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.

I am submitting to the Inquiry because...

I recognize the importance of researching all facets of Carers' contributions to the wellbeing of all Australians who are in need of care now, allowing the Government to put in place effective strategies now and for the future.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

1. The role and contribution of carers in society

As a carer, I feel that my role is...

to care for my husband of ⁵⁶65 years. He is 87 years old, is very frail and has dementia and rheumatoid arthritis. In attempting this task conscientiously and to the best of my ability I realize, and have to accept, that my identity is disintegrating and my future is being eroded. I am 76 years old and my present state of health lists the following: atrophic left kidney, chronic renal disease, ischaemic heart disease, hypertension, atrial fibrillation, anaemia. It is my role and my choice to care for my husband as long as I can.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

2. The barriers to social and economic participation for carers

As a carer, I face the following problems ...

I am virtually placed under 'house-arrest'.
The result is social isolation. All daily activities outside the house have to be organized so that they coincide with the times that I have been able to arrange for a Support Worker to be with my husband. More problems arise when I want to attend a meeting or a lecture, or, as a member of a Writers' group attend their meetings. Going to see a film, or having a cup of coffee with a friend are no longer on my program.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

3. The practical measures required to better support carers

As a carer, I need help with ...

housekeeping, gardening, and occasional jobs like window cleaning/spring cleaning, and the cleaning of gutters. This is especially important during fire danger periods.

I need access to a reliable In-House Diversional Therapy program.

I need to know that there is immediate and quality respite available when I reach the point where I need a short break to prevent me from having a complete breakdown.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

4. Strategies to assist carers to access opportunities and choices

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

- not losing sight of the greater picture of Caring for the Disabled and Caring for the Elderly, and planning for future needs. There must be accommodation for those who can no longer be cared for in their own homes. I need to know that should the time come that I cannot longer care for my husband that there is a place in a home for him close to where his loved ones live. Three of our five children live nearby which is of great benefit to us both. I like to be assured that I could stay the night with him if needed.

- looking after the Carers who work in the industry . An In-Home Diversional Therapist who works full time needs to work within a proper 'job structure' i.e. be paid an annual salary with annual leave and sick pay entitlements. I believe that this is not the case at the moment.

Casual Support Workers need to be paid according to their training and skills and the responsibilities of their job.

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

Mathilda

Print your name

22 June 2008