

Submission No. 96  
(Inq into better support for carers)

A.O.C. 23/6/08

10<sup>th</sup> June 2008

Leveina

The Secretary  
Inquiry into Better Support for Carers  
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 Youths Inquiry into Better Support for Carers.

My role as a carer is to completely attend to my 102 year old mother's needs from wiping her mouth of dribble to attending to her highest medical requirements. On a daily basis I wash, feed, house, medicate and nurse her and plan on how she can receive the best medical attention at home. This is a 24 hour 7 day a week job of love. I receive 18 hours of respite, this time is spent with taking my grandchildren to school and picking them up shopping for food and medical appointments for myself. In the last two weeks I have received 2 nights of 6 hours so I can try to get some sleep. I also cared for my husband during the last 15 years with two heart operations and two bowel cancer operations he passed away in June 2006.

I am 65 unfortunately the role of carer is very damaging to my health and body. Lifting both my husband and mother has caused damage to my back, knees and arms.

My future is grim as far as employment is concerned because of my age and physical condition. I am using my superannuation to support the carers payment and pension so that I can manage the finances. I do not have the time to shop for the best prices for food or equipment I have to buy the best I can in the shortest possible time available. My biggest disappointment is that I had to give up my position and now I am not considered to be a worker. How can someone who works physically and mentally day and night be in the eyes of society a non worker. I cannot work because of my caring role I cannot add to my superannuation as I am not a paid employee or worker.

The community assistance has been very helpful however it appears that funding is not given appropriately to the best service provider in the area. I am with a provider who is ill equipped to handle the complex problems of a 102 year extremely frail person still mobile. The problems are with nursing care as well as equipment requirements. My role as carer should be just that caring for my mother not running around frantically trying to obtain specialized equipment and services that will do the job without further injury to her frail skin bones and joints. Mum is DVA gold card without that we would not manage at all.

The practical measures that would support me would be more financial assistance more respite hours and more medical support in the community without the need to visit hospitals.

Thank you for taking my views into consideration as part of the Committee's Inquiry. I look forward to reviewing the recommendations you make in order to improve support for carers.

Yours sincerely

Leveina