

Ref: 28/7/08

2nd July 2008.

The Secretary,

Inquiry into Better Support for Carers.

Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing & Youth.

P.O. Box. 6021.

House of Representatives.

Parliament House.

Canberra. A.C.T. 2600.

Dear Sir/Madam

I as a carer for my sister Denise would like to make some submissions to your committee of inquiry into Better Support for Carers.

I have been a carer for my sister Denise (58 years old) since June 2000, when my mother Irene of Brisbane passed away.

No. 1. Submission:

- Carers forms, need to address intellectual disabilities a lot better, particularly,

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when the person has had the disability since birth, & needs to have a full time carer to survive.

eg: Denise choose to come & live with my husband Greg (who has since passed away in 2006) & Jill McKay. When first applying for the role as her carer, it was very difficult as the forms from Centrelink, for caring did not suit or fit around her intellectual disability which she has had since birth. My parents had never applied or received support as carers from the Government). So my role as her full time carer on a carer's pension was very new to me & my husband.

As Denise could do most things for herself, that were addressed on the forms for carers, the most important things like Life Skills were not on the forms. eg: could she organise herself for everyday living, housing herself, managing her money & affairs, cooking for herself, clothing herself, transporting herself, looking after her health & so on. Denise could not enjoy life or survive without my support as her carer for her daily living needs & has always needed this support & care.

## No 2. Submission

### • Re Carers Payments.

That payments could be shared, with other family members, who help care for the disabled person, if the full time carers become ill or their family member or partner becomes ill etc. so Payments could be in place to continue & one does not have to apply from the beginning again each time.

eg:

When my husband was very ill & needed constant care from myself, Denise went to my sister in Brisbane, Colleen to be cared for, after 60 days carers support was ceased & Centrelink could not transfer carers payment to Colleen, for the time difference needed. So as we would have to start again with the forms, we did not bother as my husband was too ill with cancer & Denise's doctors were in Mackay not in Brisbane. As I am now approaching 60 years & may need help for Denise's care & support from my family in Brisbane & Melbourne. (Denise & I have no family in Mackay.) Carers.

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Payments should be in place to continue to who the carer becomes.

### No 3. Submission

- Payments granted to Carers, re full-time "Carers Pension" should increase to at least basic wage figure per week.

29 I think the government should recognise "Individual Carers" who look after a family member with a disability a lot more financially for the cost to the government re: Carers Pensions is "A lot less than, if the person who is being cared for, was placed into a home for full time care." That would probably cost the government Four Times the Basic Wage per Week: That would not help the government's budget: as Carers Pensions are hard for us to budget on. & we do not have super also paid as my wage has as a full time carer for my sister Denise I cannot look at earning any income, as I need to be with her all the time. (She goes to Blue Care Respite 2 Days a week \$15 per day from 8:30am to 2:30pm. As a carer our cost of living, re housing, food, car, fuel, clothes, health etc, are not

cheaper than anyone else & there is no future of us working, getting long service or super until the person we care for is not with us. Our Jobs are full time careers, by choice & commitment of a loved one with a disability who needs Care.

No different to a politician in our government who chooses to care & be committed to our Country & the Australian People, but does receive a wage accordingly, long service, super & the support of government departments & staff. I am not complaining but look at Both Careers Position & One Can see they are Very Important in our Society.

No. 4. Submission

- Re: Communication of all departments, re: Caring for people with disabilities, should come under one department / one umbrella: Re Disabilities Department Possibly!

eg: The caring for people with disabilities, through government or government funded departments, have lack of

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communications between one another, and pass you from one department to another, or just don't know. Surely this would be better for carers & disabled to be run out of one department so arrangements & matters for the carers & the person be cared for in one place.

#### No. 5. Submission

- Future for Carers of the disabled people in our Community - Mackay.

eg: The future for my sister Denise as her carer, is that there might not be a place for her full time care, suitable for her needs, if anything happens to myself, as Mackay is very poor & limited with placements for care. The Government needs to look at this in our Region. People with disabilities like my sister Denise, could not live in a room, with house parents, as they need to be in group care living, as a family with care & support as they have been through-out their life.

#### No 6. Submission

- Communication from Government Re:

Information for CAREERS. I only found out about this inquiry through the little local newspaper 'Mackay Midweek' last Friday 27<sup>th</sup> June, inserted by Mackay's CAREERS group. (who I also was not aware of) I know it is hard to get information out to the public & the people who need to know, but as we careers are registered with centrelink, maybe the information could have come through them, as I get letters requesting information quite often re my careers position & my sister, who I care for.

The role of a carer does affect ones life, but I am from a family who has always cared & supported our sister Denise & one another. My Parents Bernie & Irene May did not "bury their heads in the sand" & not recognise that Denise had an intellectual disability, which would effect her ability to speak, walk, learn, write & communicate, but instead went out & found out how to help her. I know having private speech lessons, with a speech therapist, twice a week Wednesday & Saturday after school, from the age of 5 to about 10 years. I know because

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I used to go with her. They helped & supported the Opportunity School set up in Fortitude Valley Brisbane in the 1950's. Denise started at this school around about 6 to 7 years of age until the school placed her in employment in a Cardboard factory. She did repetition work, which she liked & would handle. As you can see, I have helped care & look after my sister with the rest of my family for most of my life. I am now her full time carer & I do it as "I love her" & want to keep her safe & in a family environment she has always been in.

I know it is not easy for the government to do everything to suit all Australians, but carers of the disabled, intellectual, physical, mental elderly and chronic ill play a very important part in our society to make sure "No matter what" that these people are cared for & enjoy their life. If we did not have carers & the government had to take on that role, people of Australia taxes, would skyrocket as the cost of setting up the homes for these people to be cared for, would be "astronomic".

Please as a committee look at all submissions of individual carers, carefully & put forward their views & concerns to recognise the part they play in our society.



the barriers they experience, the effects on their  
& their families lives, the financial difficulties,  
& the fear of the future for whom they care  
& themselves and many more problems.

I thank this committee for this opportunity  
to put forward some of my views & concerns.  
I hope this committee does not "Put its head  
in the sand" and ignore that carers need  
help & support, from them (the committee)  
as their voice to the Government, Re: the  
outcome of the submission received is  
very important to Carers & the persons being  
cared for.

I would also like to receive a report  
on the outcome of this inquiry. Thank you  
for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Patricia :