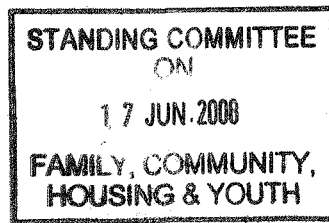


10th June, 2008



Submission No. 132
(Inq into better support for carers)
A.O.C. 25/6/08

Slavko

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

Dear Secretary,

I am writing to you 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 a carer I look after my wife, who wouldn't be able to live alone without help. In other words, she cannot live independently. Some of the things that I do every day to help my wife include: taking her to the doctor, giving her medications (supervising), cooking for her, cleaning for her, helping her to get around and taking her for a walk. I have sacrificed my engineering career in order to help her to live with some dignity. But, I feel relief that I am providing the best possible care, and caring gives me a sense of purpose.

It is well known that caring can be very tough and have negative effects on carers. The stress of caring, social isolation and loneliness are some of common causes for our emotional and mental well-being. It has happened to me.

Announcement of abolishing the Carer's bonus in future federal budgets is a complete shock to me as a carer. I was 100% sure that the Government would push for wider changes to boost support for carers and that they will increase the carer allowance. This is disappointing type of behaviour from our government. What a poor measure of our budget-experts to make cheap saving - taking from us the only saving which was credited for catching up on our overdue bills.

You do know and understand that many of us (carers) don't have any superannuation so we can't plan anything for our uncertain future. We suggest and we require that the Government introduce superannuation for all of 500,000 primary carers who are entitled to it.

We, the carers of Australia, who had great hopes of our new Government, strongly urge the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and the House of Representatives to increase our funding. We carers deserve an increase in our allowance, not only 'one-off payment' introduced from the previous government (which someone wants to abolish now).

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The Carer payment rate should be increased from 25 per cent of average weekly earnings, to 35 per cent. It means an increase in the base rate of this payment. The carer allowance should be increased from \$100 a fortnight - now, to at least \$200 a fortnight - in future.

We are delighted that the new Commonwealth Government is conducting an inquiry into better support for carers, but we want to make the point that we cannot survive on these payments.

We Australia's carers are really struggling to make ends meet living off this payment. We are buckling under the pressure of higher petrol and grocery prices. **We are struggling and we are fed up with it.** That's why we have to stand up for our rights. Two-hundred and 28 dollars a week (456.80 dollars per fortnight) - who can survive on that!?

Thank you for taking my views into consideration as part of the Committee's inquiry. I look forward to reviewing any recommendation you make to improve life for carers in Australia. I hope that you will do everything possible in order to support us and I do trust you.

Yours Sincerely

Slavko