



Submission No. 252

(Inq into better support for carers)

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Secretary

Inquiry into Better Support for Carers

Standing Committee on family, Community, Housing and Youth

P.O. Box 6021, House of Representatives, Parliament House, CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary,

I wish to make this submission to the House of Representatives standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youths inquiry into:

Better Support For Carers and their Human Rights.

I have been a carer now for four years. It is very hard trying to exist on a Disability Support Pension with only a carer's support Allowance. With the price of petrol and the price of rents escalating things are getting extremely tough for carer's like me. The average rent is more than the Disability Support Pension. So how are we supposed to manage? I doubt if any of the ministers could exist for even a day on this amount let alone exist for 7 years. How can they morally expect us to do the same?

Carers are paid a measly 25% of the average weekly wage. Mr Rudd promised to work for the working people. Carers work. Yet they have been ignored.

We need assistance as well. We need food. We need shelter. We need medical assistance when it is needed – not be on a long waiting list to see a specialist then go on another waiting list for an operation. We too need help with our housing. Rents are skyrocketing so are house prices, yet the government gives money to first home buyers for homes worth a lot more than the average cost of a house. The rich who can afford to buy an expensive house gets the money. This is not fair. What about the carer's who are still paying off a mortgage or who like me cannot afford to buy a house and have to pay rent?

An average working man works an **8hour day 5 days a week** but some carers work more than **12 hours a day 7 days a week** yet they only get 25%of the average weekly age. This is unjust, unfair and downright immoral.

I understand that government employees who are expected to work 12 hour shifts work 4 days on and have 4 days off. Carers do not have this luxury.

Employers are not allowed to have their employees work 12 hours a day 7 days a week so why should the government expect the carers to do this and to pay them only peanuts. Carers should be paid more depending on the amount of hours worked.

e.g.

Carers who work over 12 hours a day 7 days a week should be paid the average weekly wage.

Carers who work 8 hours or more a day 7 days a week should get 80% of the average weekly wage.

Carers who work 6 hours a day 7 days a week should get 60% of the average weekly wage.

Cares who work 4 hours a day 7 days a week should get 40% of the average weekly wage.

Hours worked night times and holidays and weekends should be deemed overtime.

This would still be cheaper than paying government employees to do the work.

We do not come under the Act which protects paid employees.

We do not have overtime.

We do not have holidays

We do not have leave loading.

We do not get long service leave.

We do not get meal allowances when we work overtime.

We cannot claim on tax for expenses incurred in our work.

We do not get superannuation.

We do not get many more things that paid employees get.

This is morally unjust.

I worked for a long time and paid my taxes. On retiring (from this long held job) to go on a Disability Support Pension I found my employer had not paid into a superannuation fund. This was wrong but I could do nothing about it.

The lady I care for worked when women weren't allowed to have superannuation.

Both of us have been divorced and a lot of our money and assets have been stripped from us. Finding accommodation has been difficult. The rent was \$240 per week which was almost my entire pension.

Live-in carers in addition to the caring role also have to do the housework, cooking, and cleaning etc. It's a full time job and gives little time for relaxation, socialising and entertainment. These are important activities for our general well being.

We are always giving because we are always needed. We need to have time to receive.

Under the previous government the Carer's payments and the Disability Support Pension did not rise equally to the cost of living as it did not take into account all factors.

Pensioners and Carers became poorer. Something has to change radically or the rich will become richer and the poor poorer. Unless something is changed, Australia will become like some of the corrupt countries, where the rich hold all the money and all the power. Surely Australia is better than that. How can Australia criticise other countries for their lack of human rights. Australia is not entirely blameless.

We are in the new millennium.

We need new rules, new laws to support our human rights.

The rich don't need their yachts, fancy houses, wine cellars, safes full of expensive jewellery and surplus fancy cars. That doesn't make them happy. The rich and super rich now need to have less money and to help support those, who for no fault of their own, are struggling. There is a saying: It is better to give than to receive. **We carers are giving too much and the rich are receiving too much. This imbalance needs to be addressed.**

The laws and the taxation system need to be radically altered not just tweaked.

Now is the time for Australia to lead the world in human rights.

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