



Submission No. 253
(Inq into better support for carers)
A.O.C. 30/6/08

15th. June, 2008.

The Committee Secretary,
Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth,
PO Box 6021,
House of Representatives,
Parliament House,
Canberra ACT 2600.

Dear Sir,

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.

My name is Robert [REDACTED], I am a full time Carer for my wife Shirley [REDACTED] who suffers from Motor Neuron Disease (MND). She also has heart disease. We are both 82 years of age.

Shirley was diagnosed with MND in April, 2003. She is unable to do any of the normal things for herself, including teeth cleaning, eating, toiletries, reading or adjusting clothing- buttons etc.

Although she is not bedridden as yet, she has to spend her time in an adjustable chair and only leaves our village unit to attend medical appointments and on those occasions require the use of maxi taxis. Movements in and out of chairs for toileting and bedding can only be done with the use of a hoist.

Personally, I am regularly receiving physiotherapy treatment to help manage my back and knee problems brought about by the need for me to use the hoist and to push her in her wheel and toilet chairs.

Earlier this week my wife commenced two weeks respite at the Murdoch Community Hospice in Murdoch. Although we have very good family and outside support, breaks of this nature are most welcome and are of considerable help in order that she can continue to live in our own home as long as possible.

Our experience has been that the above mentioned Hospice is the only properly equipped facility together with dedicated trained staff and volunteers where the loving care required by MND suffers is given. In each of the two nursing homes where my wife has spent periods of respite, they had not previously dealt with MND patients.

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Murdoch Community Hospice is a twenty bed facility where for respite needs they generously make two beds available for non cancer patients. Consequently the said two beds are in constant demand.

Government Help.

With the scarcity of hospice type establishments the needs of MND and other neurological disease sufferers is for funding to be made available to establish and support palliative and respite facilities.

With additional Government backing given to existing nursing establishments prepared to set apart sections for this purpose maybe one of the ways funds could be so applied.

My wife and I would appreciate you taking our views into consideration as part of the Committee's Inquiry. We look forward to reviewing any recommendations you make to improve life for Carers in Australia.

Carer Submission.