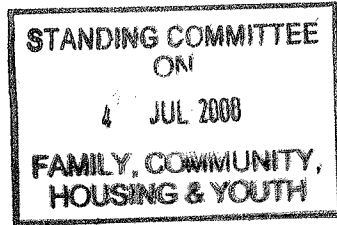




Mission Australia

A.O.C. 10/708
Submission No. 677
(Inq into better support for carers)



GPO Box 3515
Sydney NSW 2001

3 July 2008

Ms Annette Ellis MP
Chair
House Standing Committee on Family, Community,
Housing and Youth
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
Email: fchy.reps@aph.gov.au

Re: Inquiry into better support for carers

Dear Ms Ellis

Mission Australia is a national community services organisation. Our vision is to see a fairer Australia by enabling people in need to find pathways to a better life. We work across five broad areas – children and families; young people; homelessness; employment; and training, all of which have relevance to the *Inquiry into better support for carers*. Each year Mission Australia supports over 300,000 Australians.

Mission Australia welcomes the Inquiry and would particularly draw the Committee's attention to the needs of grandparents who are primary carers of their grandchildren. This is an area of particular policy, program and research interest for Mission Australia. We have attached a recent Mission Australia publication *Grandparents raising their grandchildren*, which identifies some of the key issues for this group.

Mission Australia, in partnership with the University of NSW, the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the NSW Department of Community Services, the South Australian Department of Families and Communities and the Northern Territory Health and Community Services, is currently undertaking a three year research project through the Australian Research Council, which may be of interest to the Committee.

COMPASSION INTEGRITY RESPECT PERSEVERANCE CELEBRATION

Our Vision is to see a fairer Australia by enabling people in need to find pathways to a better life

The project, *Grandparents as primary carers of their grandchildren: A national, State and Territory analysis of grandparent-headed families - policy and practice implications* has a number of aims including to:

- identify and analyse the associations between formal and informal grandparent care and socio-demographic variables: family composition and family history; the pathways into and out of informal and formal grandparent care and the duration of care; ages, labour force status, income level, and principal income sources for grandparents and parents; housing status and location of the grandparent's family residence and geographic distance from the parental residence; cultural and linguistic background of grandparent-headed families; health and disability status of grandparents, parents and children; availability and strength of informal social networks supporting grandparent care; access to and usage of family and children's services; eligibility for receipt of the range of family payments and care allowances at Commonwealth and State/Territory levels;
- identify and analyse informal and formal grandparental care circumstances in Indigenous grandparent-headed families;
- develop a social policy audit which identifies the impacts of Commonwealth and state/territory social and legal policies, including child protection, family income support and carer allowances, childcare and family support services, on the circumstances and wellbeing of grandparents (according to their formal/informal carer status);
- identify policy and practice implications of the research findings for grandparents, grandchildren and parents, in the domains of child protection, family and children's services, income support and carer allowances at Commonwealth and state/territory levels, education, housing, health services, among other policy domains, in collaboration with government and non-government policymakers and service providers at State and Commonwealth levels.

The researchers leading this project are Professor Bettina Cass, Professor Deb Brennan and Dr Sue Green from the University of NSW and Anne Hampshire from Mission Australia.

Mission Australia would be available to appear before the Committee to discuss the four areas of interest the Inquiry has identified and how they particularly relate to grandparents as primary carers. The Mission Australia contact for this submission is Anne Hampshire, National Manager, Research and Social Policy. She can be contacted on (02) 9217 1059 or 0417 297 364 or hampshirea@missionaustralia.com.au

Yours sincerely



Toby Hall
Chief Executive Officer