

Friday, 27 June 2008

A.O.C. 14/7/08
Submission No. 723
(Inq into better support for carers)

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

Dear Secretary

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.

I feel that my role is demanding, stressful, exhausting and without any doubt an important part of my child's development in the world and society.

I contribute to Australian Society by undertaking this role and giving up the chance to be in the workforce to ensure my role as a Carer is met on a 24/7 basis.

I face the following problems on a day to day basis:

- I have to be on call should the school call me if there is a problem with my child on any given day.
- I am unable to be in the workforce because it is just too stressful and finding an employer who will understand my need as a carer of a child with a disability is few and far between. At times when I have worked I have to leave should the school call me to console my son or if he has become unwell as he frequently has appointments with specialists, trips to Adelaide to see Eye Specialists etc. Or help him to overcome whatever the issue may have been.
- I have to be forever vigilant to ensure my child is safe and my role as a carer is demanding and stressful on every day of the week.
- I cannot have a social life as I feel that I have to be there 24 hours a day to ensure my child is taken care of properly. There aren't any people trained in taking care of an Autistic child in country areas like Whyalla and I have been told that if I require him to have more support and aide time at school I have to pay for the cost.
- I have not had a break from my child as a carer in at least over two years.
- I am financially struggling because I have given up working as the needs for me to be there for my child on a daily basis is too stressful to try and even contemplate working when I know there is going to be problems with my child daily.
- I would love to get back into the workforce but I would only like to work while my child is at school so I can be there for my child to take to school and be there when school finishes. I really would one day like to work full time but at present it would be too much for me to cope with having to be a carer of a

child with a disability and working a full time job and managing the household.

- I find it is too difficult to even work part time which I have done because of the lack of aid time supplied to my son in the Education Dept. I recently moved from Perth where he was allocated an aide three days per week opposed to the irrational 7hrs per week my child received in SA Education Dept.
- I worry about my future as mentally and physically I am at my wits end. It drains me immensely on a day to day basis the issues I have to tackle but I do it with great love as a mother of a child with a disability but I fear my health has been affected being in the caring role 24/7.
- The things that stress me the most about being a Carer are lack of support in the Education system where Autism isn't really recognised in a small country town and the fear of other people thinking I just have an uncontrollable naughty child. I also feel emotionally and physically drained as there is no time to myself.
- When I lived in Perth a year ago the local council offered respite to the carer and this was done on a three monthly basis so you could go away relax and find time to regain your inner self and come home rejuvenated to carry on again. This was funded and as I didn't work it was of great benefit for my role as a Carer. The local Council even gave the child with the disability outings in School holidays which gave the carer a break yet again. Why should it be different in another state? This made me feel like the community recognised the role a Carer plays and I felt it was of great significance in order to be a Carer it helped immensely.
- Also in Perth Carers were recognised by the Community and Business's either government or private and as I didn't work certain places i.e.: Perth Zoo/Ten pin bowling/Football Park/Cinema's and the list goes on recognised a Carer's role and the Carer didn't have to pay to go to these places as it helps to get the child or person with the disability out into the community. It was on the basis of having a child or person with a disability you were issued a Carer Card which you produced to get the discounts.

Thank your for taking my views into consideration as part of the Committee's Inquiry. I look forward to reviewing any recommendations you make to improve life for Carers in Australia.

Yours sincerely

Yvonne

•