

1 July 2008

Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing & Youth  
P O Box 6021 -- House of Representatives,  
Parliament House, CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary

I take this opportunity to submit my personal contribution to the Government 's Inquiry into Better Support for Carers.

As a 62 y.o. woman who cares in home for

- 1) A 52 y.o. husband who has been an A.B.I. patient for 19 years, and
- 2) A 92 y.o. mother who has always lived with me and is now frail and almost totally blind

I firstly thank Brainlink who put me on their register some 4 years ago and through these connections I have had some great sharing experiences.

#### Non-existent Younger Patient Respite Facilities

Respite has not been successful for me, because my high care assessed 52 y.o. husband had to go into an aged care facility and it was a 2 week heartbreak to see him (*yes I visited him because it was the first time*) mixed in with frail and mostly dementia aged people. I will in fact put this on the back burner for as long as I can hold out. **We need places for younger people to go into . 3 or 4 long-weekend breaks would be more beneficial to carers than the current 2 week minimum stay at these institutions.** Just to have the occasions to look forward to!

#### More regular Carer Groups

I wish there **was more funding that I could meet on a more regular basis with other carers.** As there are always new carers coming into the system obviously Brainlink and Villa Maria need to give them access to the 6 week group sessions . **Group meetings are beneficial on so many levels. We learn and share: coping skills, access to various services and the fantastic morale boost is inexplicable.** Personal break-away group meetings usually fizzle out after a few months.

#### T.V. Ad Campaigns to Carer and Patient Families and Friends

I have tried for many years to get family and friends more involved by including us in their activities more or even taking over our (and their loved ones ) for the odd weekend so we carers have more regular short breaks to become our original single selves. With shockingly N IL results. **It is hard to beg yourself but maybe Ads would raise their awareness of the joy our patients would have to have short "breaks" with people they are familiar with.**

I appreciate all that we do get , and we do need to take responsibility for our loved ones ourselves. But I do know that with every year my resourcefulness and joy depletes and anxiety increases.

Regards

Gloria t

