

Rec 18/7/08

Submission No. 919

(Inq into better support for carers)

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CONNECTIONS

- 1) INDEPENDENT LIVING TRAINING & COMMUNITY ACCESS SERVICE
- 2) POST SCHOOL OPTIONS SERVICE
- 3) TRANSITION TO WORK.
- 4) COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
- 5) CRISIS SUPPORT.
- 6) BROKERAGE AND RESPITE.

23rd June, 2008.

To the Committee Secretary,

Connections is a service provider for adults with both physical and intellectual disabilities. We offer this service to folk who have moderate to high support needs.

Our Mission is,

“To support service users to develop individual options, community access, participation and lifestyle skills”.

Our philosophy is,

“To coordinate resources and services to ensure each person enjoys a quality of life with dignity, enjoyment and purpose.”

In our daily dealings with our clients we also have a close partnership with our clients carers. The carers of our clients are mainly parents who care for their family member at home, some clients are in Accommodation services and some reside at Retirement homes

. We offer day programs and some respite services. We would like to mainly concentrate on our parent carers in this submission as they constitute our largest group at this stage.

The NSW Premier, Morris Iemma stated that,

“Carers are the backbone of a community....” [20th April, 2008. The Sun Herald].

The role carers play in our society is not reflected in the treatment they receive financially or by means of support networks that can offer respite to them.

We see in our service [that operates from 9am-3pm Monday to Friday,] that most of our parents are unable to work full time.

Apart from the daily exhaustion they face from caring for their loved ones, jobs that are flexible and part time are not readily available in country areas. The carers must be available after 3pm for their family member.

Sadly it is very evident that many people in our service are cared for in a single family situation, usually by the mother. This is also reflected in the wider community. This by its very nature places our carer in a disadvantaged financial position.

Most of our carers are also socially isolated for the same reasons. Financially they don't have much to spare and they usually have the care of their loved one and community access is difficult both physically and financially. There appears to be no one caring for the carer.

The ageing carer is a major problem. Many of our carers are over 60 years of age and are very fearful about the future of their loved ones. There are very few available places in Accommodation Services and Aged Care Facilities are not always an option or appropriate.

Planning for the future is a terrifying prospect for a carer who has cared for their loved one at home for many years and then has to face the prospect of a placement when they themselves become too old or frail.

We cannot emphasise too strongly the valuable contribution that the carer offers society , not only the enormous cost savings that they make but the depth of care that they offer.

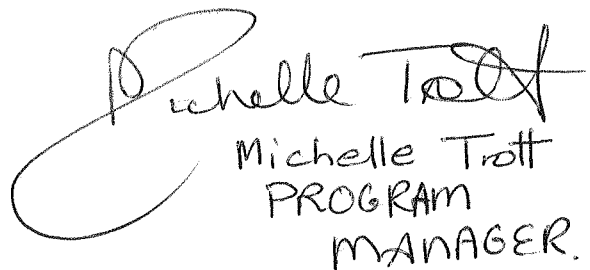
A measure of society is evident in how we treat those with disabilities and ill health. Our carers offer love, support, care, and financial as well as emotional needs. They deserve the same to be given to them.

“The odds are pretty good that ‘normal’ people reading these words will become disabled within twenty or thirty years, and many readers with disabilities will become people with multiple disabilities”. Lennard J Davis 1995.

We must plan now for our ageing population both with a disability and those caring for those with a disability.



Yours Sincerely,
Robbie Duff.
Service Manager.



Michelle Trott
PROGRAM
MANAGER.