

To Larry Anthony
Minister For Children And Youth Affairs
Federal Government
Canberra
A.C.T

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25TH June 2003-06-25



House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs
Submission No: 81
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Secretary: _____

Re Grandparents Raising Grandchildren As Relative Careers

Sir,

I belong to an organisation called Kin Kare and wish to submit some details to you in regards to the above mentioned subject.

[REDACTED]

60yrs; separated; receive a disability support pension; and am the sole carer of my 5yr old Granddaughter who is under a child protection order until 18yrs of age. She was in my care and living with me in Q.L.D. while still under the Director General N.S.W. for two years waiting transfer to Q.L.D. During this period of time I was receiving an allowance of \$350-00 per Fortnight; also set up an Education fund; and an investment portfolio for her future years etc; and was working very well; and was very pleased about doing so; and was able to have her enrolled into a College of my choice; . Since she has been transferred into Q.L.D. from the 4-12-2002 her allowance being paid to me for her care has been reduced by approx 45% to \$185-12 plus \$35-00 clothing allowance a total of \$220-12 per Fortnight which I am not very impressed about at all.

During the Court proceedings in Sydney I was commended by the Magistrate in the action that I had taken in asking for her to be placed with me instead of being shunted around the system; from one Career to another; and for the good working repour that I had with the Department Of Children's Services N.S.W.; her comments were if all Grandparents took the same steps as you have for your Granddaughter it would make our task in the Courts a lot easier; and I thank-you; . But what transpired during the transfer and the treatment that one was given by the authorities; and the reduction of her allowance; I strongly believe that the Children have no rights and neither do there Grandparents; and can understand why a lot of Grandparents turn there heads and walk away from theses situations; not that I would even consider doing so; but do fell that the system is very unjust; not fair upon the Children or the Grandparents and strongly agree that it needs to be changed for the better; .

Why should there be a different payment systems from one State to another; after all these are the children of Australia; and when you speak to the Authorities about the needs of the children they say the children and there needs are paramount; and in the next breath they say we do not have the funds; so what do they mean????

My granddaughter is reasonably well looked after, compared to other Relative Careers or Grandparents caring for Grandchildren that I have had the pleasure in meeting who are caring for their Grandchildren and receive no allowance what so ever apart from the family allowance from Centre Link, which is absolutely disgusting; and any Government should be ashamed of this situation that these people are in; it is about time that the Federal Government and State Governments take along hard look at what Grandparents as Relative Careers are doing for their Grandchildren; with next door to no support; no help; no back-up and an inadequate allowance if you are fortunate enough to receive one; please take into consideration that we are talking about Grandparents; of whom the majority are either retired and live on a pension; and to Cloth, Feed, Educate and entertain a young child on \$220-00 per Fortnight is a near impossibility; and that's if you are receiving the Relative Careers allowance; as mentioned before a lot are not. Also I would like to bring to your attention the plight of some of the children who are being cared for by their Grandparents; since attending Kin Kare meetings one hears the same stories over and over again; and the Grandparents in tears as they try to explain their heart breaking situations; the children have been returned to their natural mother once again and only to have the children returned back to the Grandparents after a couple of months; as the natural mother could not cope or things just did not work out; the children are traumatised; and do not know what is going to happen next; some even require psychological help; and it is left up to the Grandparents to settle them down again; and what about the grandparents they are completely stressed out; no one wants to listen to their plight; they feel alienated and the Departments do not seem to care as long as the children can be placed back with the Natural mother even if it is only for a short time before it all falls apart again; in some cases it is not the best option to have the children placed back with their Mother; this is not an isolated case I know of two Grandparents in our small group of eight or so people in our area that this has happened too; and one case has just happened again in the last month for about the third time in a row; and she is absolutely beside herself with grief and concern for her Grandchild; but once again who CARES; the Departments do not seem too; the State and Federal Governments do not seem too; the only ones who do care are the Grandparents; the Children are concerned; but they are directed by the Department, and no matter what the Departments say we as Grandparents know that the children have no rights and neither do the Grandparents; So who really cares about the children????

Mr Anthony you yourself as Federal Minister of Children and Youth Affairs must realise and know that there is a major problem out there in the field of Relative Careers and Grandparents raising Grandchildren around Australia; as I know that you have had correspondence from COTA National Seniors Policy Secretariat on our behalf as Grandparents; and have attended meetings at various venues around Q.L.D. and most probably other States of Australia and ask of you to deal with the problem as soon as possible; and to give the Children and their Relative Careers; and Grandparents who are caring for their Grandchildren a fair and just deal; and to recognise them for what they are accomplishing in the community at large; it is a changing society to day with the breakdown of family units; and a lot of the Grandparents are picking up the pieces under very adverse conditions.

Yours Faithfully

Concerned Relative Career Q.L.D.