

Committee Secretary
Inquiry into Better Support for Carers
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family,
Community, Housing and Youth

Submission No. 56
(Inq into better support for carers)

A.O.C. 16/6/08

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 am submitting to the Inquiry because...

I think the role of a carer is not recognize at all, carers need access to services if the person whom they are caring for are admitted to hospital, carers need to know where these services are available

More information is attached on a separate sheet

1. The role and contribution of carers in society

As a carer, I feel that my role is...

to care for my family and also for myself

More information is attached on a separate sheet

2. The barriers to social and economic participation for carers

As a carer, I face the following problems ...

loneliness, not enough support, centrelink must let carers know what services are available also what benefits the carer can get, explanation of what is actually the difference of a carers pension & a carers allowance

More information is attached on a separate sheet

3. The practical measures required to better support carers

As a carer, I need help with ...

support, respite, someone to talk to, therapy
for depression

More information is attached on a separate sheet

4. Strategies to assist carers to access opportunities and choices

I think the Government can better help carers by ...

once a carer is registered with Centrelink, an
ongoing support for the family so as not to
flounder in the impression there is no help
or support the family as I was, not to have
to find out too late what there is available

More information is attached on a separate sheet

Thank you 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

JORANNE

Print your name

6-6-08

Date

Dear Maria

6-6-08

Finally I can tell my story to someone who might listen.

In 1974 when I was a young wife with 3 small children, my husband became ill, a nervous breakdown was diagnosed and he spent some time in a psychiatric ward, where he went through shock treatment and various other treatments, all the while no help was offered to me by social workers, no one came to me to help.

Along the way through a word of mouth I learned that there was a place called Social Security that I could go to to ask for help with finances, but again no one told me about social workers so I could have a talk about my own feelings or insecurities, of how to work out my finances.

My husband was readmitted to hospital once again in 1975 after a relapse, again I struggled through the same problem, no help from anyone except with finances and 3 small children to feed and a house to pay off but no one to talk to.

Some how things worked out for me and the family, when my husband came home from the hospital. I learned how to

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cope with everything, but for my own peace of mind I had no one to talk to, in 1981 I once again became pregnant with my youngest son, another thing to cope with, things were getting very stressful as my husband was not getting any better.

Late 1981 my son was born, I was by that time at a very bad stage having to cope, which was starting to show in my face, it was only through a very kind maternity nurse at the local health centre that all my feelings, pent up till then, I broke down and told her the whole story, she advised me to go to the hospital for some help at the clinic of psychiatry, finally I had some help and could talk things out.

My husband was put on a disability pension by Centrelink at that time because he was diagnosed with a dementia problem with frontal lobe damage due to an injury to his head in the past, but still no contact from Centrelink for help by Social workers, I just did not know what benefits there were or if I could go onto a carers pension, as I was having to cope with a disabled husband and also a disabled son who was diagnosed with an intellectual disability at the age of 3.

Finances were very tight, with a married couples pension and an domiciliary allowance for my husband of \$52.00 a fortnight & really had to watch my pennies as there were 6 people to feed, bills and a mortgage too along the way I learned of the ADARDS people, a support group for people who have a family member with dementia, these people understood what I was coping with, it was nice to be able to meet people more or less in the same stressful way I was, through this group I learned how to cope much better, I was able to have a carer for my husband while I was at these meetings.

I became involved with Interchange because of my sons dissability and learned of Carers Australia, which was a great relief and have been linked into other services, but in all this time I still was not informed by Centrelink that I could have been on the Carers pension, from the start, I think that people in my situation should be made aware just what the entitlements are, what questions should be answered so no one has to struggle like I had to, carers save the governments millions of dollars by the job that we do, our hard work must be given a voice, it still is ongoing, my son lives at home with me, he is very independent now

I prefer he lives at home, and not in a community house as he has his freedom and is in a stable environment which he needs, my husband now lives in a special accommodation, but comes home once every 5 weeks to spend time with the family for the weekend, I can cope with that, I have learnt through all of these 34 years, lots of learning has been done by me, things don't get me down so much, I still feel sad about the things I've lost along the way, my husband, my bread winner, my lover, the father of my children, they have also lost someone whom they loved, I still have a cry sometimes, I do get lonely because I don't have someone just for me, whom I can receive a hug from, just for me.

But then I'm a mother, I'm the carer, I look after everyone, but through the Carers Association I have learnt how to care for myself, thank you.

Sincerely,
Johanne

STANDING COMMITTEE
ON
12 JUN 2008
FAMILY, COMMUNITY
HOUSING & YC