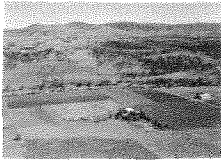


A.O.C. 14/7/08

Submission No. 748

(Inq into better support for carers)



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30<sup>th</sup> June, 2008

Secretary,  
Inquiry into Better Support for Carers,  
Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth,  
P.O. Box 6021,  
House of Representatives,  
Parliament House,  
Canberra. ACT. 2600

Dear Secretary,

On behalf of the Committee and members of the Lockyer Valley Community Disability Assoc. Inc. [LVCDA], I would like to make a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth Inquiry into Better Support for Carers.

The LVCDA is a support group, run by volunteers, for Carers and Clients who have Physical, Intellectual or Mental Health disabilities and we also fundraise to try to provide more resources for our members and the community in the Lockyer Valley.

Part of our function is a drop-in centre in Laidley which is available to everyone who feels the need to socialise, express any concerns and generally have somewhere to go for support. As coordinator, I am confronted on a daily basis by Carers who are distressed, stressed, at their wits end, suffering their own health issues and unable to cope with the responsibility of caring for a loved one at home. The general consensus is a feeling of neglect and no help and recognition for their decision to care for the family member in a loving home environment. The home is the best place to help people with disabilities socialise and integrate in the community but with no support it is extremely difficult.

The biggest issue I have observed is the lack of short term respite or in home support in this region. At present, it is non-existent and the future prospects are not very encouraging. Our carers would benefit greatly with some respite and would feel better able to cope with this kind of support. The provision of long term supported accommodation is another concern with many of our older carers concerned about what will happen to their family member when they can no longer provide the care needed at home. This service is also not available in the Lockyer Valley.

I know from discussions with Carers that social lives are non-existent and the lack of finances is another issue with most of our members trying to survive on a Carer Support Payment as their caring role restricts them in finding outside employment for the same reasons as previously mentioned - no in home support or respite. I am also aware of a few of our members who have turned to drugs and alcohol abuse as a coping mechanism and concerns are held for the welfare of the children involved.

Our organisation believes that the provision of respite facilities is urgently needed now to address the issues mentioned and would like to advise that it is already too late for some of our carers who abandoned their loved ones [under great distress] as they could no longer cope.

I, personally, and my volunteers are affected deeply by the issues we are confronted with and hope that this information can help improve the situation for Carers.

Thank you for allowing us to express our views and concerns as part of your Inquiry.

Respectfully,



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Paula Halson, Treasurer - LVCDA.