

A.O.C. 5/6/08

---

**From:** Juliet Bourke [juliet.bourke@aequus.com.au]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 3 June 2008 12:39 PM  
**To:** Committee, FCHY (REPS)  
**Cc:** Macklin, Jennifer (MP); Joan Hughes; Brian Babington  
**Subject:** Submission: Inquiry into better support for carers

Dear Secretary of the Committee

I write as the Chair of the (former) Taskforce on Care Costs and commend the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, The Hon Jenny Macklin MP, for initiating the *Inquiry into better support for carers*.

Over a period of four years (2003 to 2007), the Taskforce (a strategic alliance of 45 business and community organisations) conducted research on the relationship between work and care, and published four major reports as well as Australia's first Childcare Affordability Index. This research can be found on [www.tocc.org.au](http://www.tocc.org.au).

Pleasingly, the (now) Government has implemented one of the Taskforce's key recommendations in relation to the higher subsidisation of childcare costs, as part of the 2008 Budget.

On 16 November 2007, the Taskforce released its final report entitled "The hidden face of care: Combining work and caring responsibilities for the aged and people with a disability". Based on survey and focus group data, and with the assistance of Families Australia and Carers Australia, this report makes ten key findings in relation to the experience of working/unemployed carers of the aged and people with a disability. These findings focus on the current state of play in relation to services and workplace support (eg access to flexible work practices) and the outcomes in terms of workforce participation.

In summary, the Taskforce found that *"although public rhetoric acknowledges the need to help carers of the aged and people with a disability to balance their work and caring responsibilities, in reality tangible support is insufficient and ineffective. This is evident in relation to public policy (eg legislation, financial support and service provision) as well as workplace policy and practices. As a consequence of the mismatch between rhetoric and reality, carers of the aged and/or people with a disability are much less likely to participate in the paid workforce, and at a level commensurate with their skills and qualifications. The marginalisation of carers is patently inequitable and poses an immediate and growing threat to Australia's continued economic prosperity"*. (p 4)

The Taskforce made five recommendations for action, including in relation to services, legislation and workplace support.

I commend the Taskforce's body of research to the Standing Committee, and in particular the findings and recommendations of "The hidden face of care".

If I can assist the Committee further, please do not hesitate to contact me via email or on (02) 9810 7176.

Yours faithfully  
Juliet Bourke  
Chair, TOCC

Juliet Bourke | Partner | Aequus Partners  
T | (612) 9810 7176 M | 0414 426 939 F | (612) 9810 7173 W | <http://www.aequus.com.au/>

3/06/2008