

Submission No. 1018

(Inq into better support for carers)

Doc 28/7/08

1st July, 2008

Dear Sir,

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.

Having been a Carer for my wife for 12 years and saving the Government hundreds of thousands of dollars before I needed to place her into an Aged Care facility at the age of 54, I was appalled at the way I was treated by Centrelink and other agencies with whom I was dealing with.

All our respite and home help finished the instant she was in care regardless of whether I was coping or not. Centrelink did not know what to do with us as she was in Aged Care but was not an aged pensioner. It was obvious that they did not know how to handle our situation.

Because my wife was in need of a hoist, a special bed, a wheelchair and other disabled equipment as she is high care, I had to access my Superannuation to pay part of these necessities. When I put my wife into full time care the Agencies concerned were very quick to take possession of this equipment with no refund to myself. I am now left with next to nothing in my Superannuation for my future. It is a shame there is not something like work-cover, namely Care-Cover to now help me with my injured back which was sustained by lifting and handling my wife.

I now work two days a week, which I find very difficult due to my back injury also anything I earn also affects her pension and therefore I find myself subsidising her accommodation fee, chemist fee and anything else she requires.

Having to put our loved ones in permanent Aged Care is stressful enough without having all these other items to contend with.

I believe the Government can better help Carers by finding a solution to this type of problem by having one centrepiece of reference for services. One agency with people trained in all aspects of Carer's problems and situations, who can then show a bit of empathy while guiding us in the right direction instead of making us feel worthless. One central place to get answers from instead of going from one to another and in the end still not knowing what is expected of us.

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

Leslie