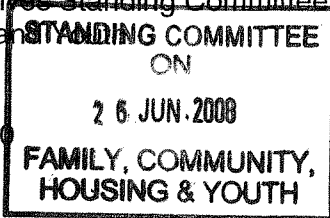


Committee Secretary
Inquiry into Better Support for Carers
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family,
Community, Housing and Youth
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

A.O.C. 7/7/08
Submission No. 525
(Inq into better support for carers)



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 feel that carers' role is under appreciated by government, both State & Federal, general members of the public and even some family members.

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...

Extremely important; obviously to my husband who is unable to do most things for himself and none at all for me, but to the taxpayers of this country. Without the work & dedication of carers, hundreds or thousands of people, both young and old, would be in hospital & nursing homes. This would create a huge drain on the economy & cause major disruption in hospitals.

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 ...

I cannot just "up & go" any-where. Careful planning must be put in place before I leave home. I have to arrange for a paid carer to mind my husband, check that his medication is organised lunch prepared etc. He is unable to attend social functions with him & I feel as though I am "neither wife nor widow". I was unable to continue my career as a teacher even though I had passed retirement age.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

3. The practical measures required to better support carers

As a carer, I need help with ...

FINANCIAL SUPPORT. Better public understanding of carers problems & the contribution we make to society.

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 ...

Supporting carers agencies better. This can be achieved by more financial aid for them and recognition of all the wonderful work they do. There also ought to be more respite beds available (particularly high care beds) so that we carers can have well deserved breaks.

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

Print your name

BETTY

Date

12/6/08

22/6/08

To Whom It May Concern

First I would like to pay tribute to Carers' Victoria and all the associated Health professionals who have helped me considerably since I became a full time carer over 4 years ago. I must add that I have been caring for my husband for many years before that but hadn't availed myself of all their services. This was partly through ignorance and unwillingness on my part as I felt that he was my responsibility and that I should have been able to cope.

A heart bypass for my husband, followed by over 6 months hospitalization and a Nursing Home stay, plus round the clock nursing by me convinced me that I needed help and these wonderful people rallied around for me. My GP instigated an assessment and the rest followed.

My submission would be that more needs to be done regarding advertising of all the existing facilities and organizations for carers. For example, I didn't know until recently that my husband is eligible for continence finance. The organizations themselves are strapped for cash and considering how much the Government is being saved by people such as my husband and others not being in Nursing Homes and being cared for at home, I feel more needs to be done both for carers and those above mentioned organizations.

Few people who are not carers or who are Health professionals really don't understand our position. Even family members and friends, helpful and supportive though they be, can't know fully what we have to endure day in and day out. It is a relentless and never ending job with sometimes no "light at the end of the tunnel". We are frightened to go away and leave our loved ones as the minute our backs are turned they could have a fall or worse. The only time we can relax is when we use the respite services which are few and far between. My husband has been diagnosed as "high care" now and the nearest respite facility is several kilometres away. There are none at all in Berwick where I live. Very few Nursing Homes have facilities for High Care patients and yet us carers need a break!

People take for granted that as we get older we can go on trips, have coffee "down the street" go shopping or even have part time jobs. For many of us that isn't an option. I am lucky as my husband isn't a dementia patient and has a Mepac alarm system and I can go out now and again and have another paid carer to be with him in my absence. I can also "duck" down the street for shopping and have people come for coffee or a meal. Many are not so lucky as I.

I respectfully ask that more funds can be made available for all the Carer groups and Health Professionals and organizations so that more facilities can be made available and more staff be hired to help with this quickly growing and much under funded and understated problem

Yours Faithfully

Betty,