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Submission No. 867
(Inq into better support for carers)

From: Margaret
Sent: Friday, 4 July 2008 6:35 PM
To: Committee, FCHY (REPS)
Subject: Better support for Carers

I wish to make a submission to the House of Reps Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth's Inquiry into Better Support for Carers. I am the sole Carer for my mildly handicapped son of 42 who lives with me and has done so all his life. I am 77 years of age and have been a widow for the past 22 years. I have developed on-going health problems. Despite some respite funding which allows my son to go to football training and a concert or outing now and then, the chances I have to get maybe 10 days holiday in 12 months requires enormous efforts. The cost of overnight and part-daytime carer seems to use up so much of the allowance. It should not be such a struggle for carers to get BREAKS. When I think of what I have saved the Government over the course of 42 years! If and when I am no longer able to care for my son I must know that he can go somewhere where he will be well looked after and happy. I know for a fact that there is a colossal shortage of accommodation supplied by the Government agencies - there are thousands on waiting lists., with only one or two placed each year. I know there are so many others far more desperate than I am, but when is the situation going to improve? The hourly rate actually in the hand of carers coming from an agency is \$16.40. I pay a house cleaner \$20 an hour. Surely this cannot be fair. A society that is so niggardly with assistance to the weakest in its ranks is pretty poor. We as carers are not wanting to throw in the towel, but just to be able to ask for and get help where and when it is needed. We are an aging population with higher and higher rate of dementia. There just must be funds provided to help these people who have contributed so much to the building of the society we have today. Instead of large unwieldy Government departments for this that and the other, would it not be better to have a honey-comb of neighbourhood "cells" where help could be so much more immediate? Most people in need to-day do not have large family support networks to call upon. It's very much the attitude of "I'm alright Jack, pull up the ladder". Please let us get the priorities right and start helping the most needy and perhaps diverting some funds from building ever more freeways for one thing!

Yours sincerely,
(Mrs) Margaret

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