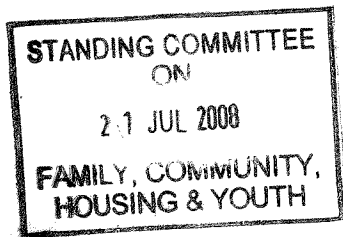


Rec 2.11.7/08



Submission No. 994
(Inq into better support for carers)

2 July 2008

Mrs Rita

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth
PO Box 6021
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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 the sole carer for my 28 year old mentally ill son. Since he became ill, I have had to drastically adjust my life in order to care for him properly. I have been unable to participate in and enjoy social and family activities, I am also unable to fully meet my religious commitments and do not take small breaks or holidays in fear of what might happen to him. I believe that as a mother it is my responsibility to care for my son, but also acknowledge that Carers in Australia carry a huge burden that was not expected of them many years ago.

The biggest challenge I face as a carer is that of dealing with the current Australian health system. I regularly take my son to health assessments and medical appointments with State Government professionals and am shocked and extremely disappointed at how I am treated. As my son is an adult, I have been told that I must wait outside when he is being consulted with and am hardly included in discussions.

After leaving the appointments I am none the wiser and I am sure you can appreciate that there is a lack of understanding from my son due to his illness. It often feels like we are going around in circles without progression. I understand that there are privacy laws in place to protect individuals, but how can Australia solve the mental illness crisis which is upon us and progress as a Nation if carers are not consulted with?

As a carer, and more importantly a parent, I need to know and understand my son's condition and the ways to which I can help him. I believe I have been treated as part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

I think it is crucial for carers, especially parents of children needing care, to be consulted with and supported by all levels of Government and recognised as source of help. There needs to be a more balanced way the Government can deal with carers of adult children.

I worry for my son's future under the current system and hate to think what would happen to him if I was not there to look after him. How would Australia cope if Carers like me could not do our job?

Thankyou 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,

Rita