

A.O.C. 3/6/08

From: janet
Sent: Monday, 2 June 2008 1:33 PM
To: Committee, FCHY (REPS)
Subject: Carers submission

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.

My husband and I care for two daughters and a grandson with varying degrees of intellectual impairment , ranging from mild to moderate. Our daughters are in their late 40's and our grandson is 15.

We feel that we have contributed to Australian society by trying to cope on our own, but now we are realise the futility and stupidity of our actions.

We have never taken advantage of any carers' allowances from Centrelink, because we felt as we had a reasonable income we did not have the right to ask for help as there are so many people in need.

We have spent most of our married life caring for them - lovingly, I hope - with very little help from anyone. Consequently we are both suffering from elevated stress levels. We both have high blood pressure, digestion problems, back pain and a number of other stress related conditions including depression and anxiety. My husband has had a quintuple heart bypass and is still recovering.

Our working and social life is and has been totally governed by the need to consider our caring responsibilities first. We would love at our age - 68 and 71 - to be able to go on an even slightly, extended holiday, but unless we were to take our daughter/s and grandson with us this would be impossible. Financially and logistically it's just not achievable.

We have both been involved with various sheltered workshops, respite care committees, boards, focus and advisory groups etc. for nearly 40 years. We have tried so hard to help our children and we are truly in despair of ever achieving a secure future for them.

We are are frightened to think about what is going to happen to our children when we have passed away. Will they be taken care of in a group home? (what group home??) Will they be taken advantage of? Who will help them with their money, health, dental etc, etc? Will they be lonely? This is what stresses us more than any other issue.

I know that giving specific examples of how we could be helped would be useful to your inquiry but we are so worn down and depressed that we have trouble coming up with any reasonable suggestions.

I know we both are in need of fairly extensive psychological support and a bit of recognition for the many years of care wouldn't go amiss.

In conclusion, I feel that the inquiry needs to urgently address the needs of mature carers who are so desperately in need of some certainty for their loved ones. Many of us have savings and property that we would be willing to co-contribute, with the government to ensure a safe residence for our 'children'. Please help.

Thankyou for listening to our concerns. We look forward to this inquiry helping carers of Australia.

***Yours sincerely,
Janet***