

ROC 16/17/08  
**Submission No. 836**  
(Inq into better support for carers)

Dear Committee,

*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.*

For the past 5 years I have been caring for my nephew Jeffrey . Jeffrey is a 16 year old boy with a Mild Intellectual Disability. He also has a diagnosis of ADHD, Conduct Disorder and Complex Behavioural Issues.

I live in Cobar which is an isolated town in Western New South Wales. I receive a New Start allowance from Centrelink and I take part in voluntary community work.

In 2006 the school informed Jeffrey that he could sign himself out once he had turned 16. I struggled enough trying to keep Jeffrey in school at that time. Jeffrey has not attended school since April 2006 and stays at home everyday. I have added stress and worry about Jeffrey while he is at home alone and I am at work in case of an emergency as I do not know how Jeffrey would react to an emergency.

We suffer from social isolation as neither I nor Jeffrey has any family in Cobar. My working and social life is overseen by the need to consider my caring responsibility, which makes it difficult for me to do things and I rarely get time to myself. I struggle to find someone to look after Jeffrey if I need to go somewhere or do anything because of his age, as most people tell me he is too old to require a babysitter.

There is no residential respite support in Cobar and the nearest respite service is 130 kilometres away.

What we would like is an increase in appropriate care facilities with well trained staff, and/or more money to assist with the cost of day-to-day living expenses of supporting a child/adult with needs i.e. travel, medical, babysitters.

I feel that the issues I discussed are common amongst other carers and families such as stress from the responsibilities of caring everyday as well as day-to-day duties in life, financial restriction from being a carer, loneliness, lack of opportunities such as education, work and leisure.

I often sit down and think about who can actually help carers when things get tough and they are struggling for survival. At this state I cannot suggest any specific solutions in order to support carers as I am personally overwhelmed.

Yours Sincerely,  
Barbara