

Submission No. 906  
(Inq into better support for carers)

Geoff

To Whom It May Concern.

My name is Geoffrey , and I am a Carer. I became a Carer in August 1992, even though I had been looking after this person since her accident in 1987. In 1998 I suffered a breakdown, and was placed on a Disability Support Pension. Even though I continued performing the same duties as a Carer, Centrelink advised me I was better off on the DSP.

In 1999 I commenced study towards a Bachelor of Science degree, by external studies with Monash University, Gippsland. I now have a Bachelor of Science, a Bachelor of Computing, and I am currently halfway through a Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Science, by fully online study from Curtin University of technology, Perth.

**Carers; especially young Carers, may not be Carers all their lives. They need some assistance with their future. I have a HECS debt, which I doubt if I will ever repay. If I had not been able to study, I may have taken my own life; such are the stresses of being a Carer. Young Carers should be given every opportunity to extend their education and training, and when they finally join the work force, they should not be lumbered with a debt that keeps them from ever achieving anything they lost as a result of being a Carer.**

I am unable to get a job, for the simple reason, I do not have any referees. As an example, the Australian Public Service will not employ anyone who cannot produce a reference. **I receive payment from Centrelink, in recognition of the fact I save the Australian and various State Governments a considerable amount of money. I should be considered an employee of the Federal Government; as should any Carer, and I should be able to cite my experience as a Carer as a reference from the Federal Government.**

In three months time I will turn 65, the most I can expect is a reduction in income, as I will no longer receive Pensioner Education Supplement, and will find it difficult to retain Mobility Allowance. Should I cease as a Carer, I will have nowhere to go. I do not own a car; I do not own a house. On a single Aged Pension I will not be able to live anywhere that has basic services needed by an aging person, such as hospitals or medical centres. I will be forced to move my possessions as best I can to a more remote area, where I can afford accommodation, but cannot go anywhere, except by public transport if it exists.

**I remember John Howard; when he became Prime Minister, stating it cost over \$1260 a week to place someone in a nursing home. It would be bizarre if that figure had decreased. At that time my Carer payment was about \$220 a week, so I saved**

**the Federal Government over \$1000 a week. A Carer does not receive sufficient income to save for their retirement. I have been a Carer in one way or another for over 20 years. In that time I have saved the Federal Government over one million (\$1,000,000) dollars. Surely in recognition for my efforts the Federal Government can make some provision to house me in an area more suited to an aging person.**

I was on the NSW Housing list for a house, but as I was the Carer, it had to be on the application lodged by the person I cared for. It is only recently as a Senior, I was advised I could apply in my own right. I will not get Housing Commission accommodation. The person I care for was offered houses. The first was in an area notorious for its crime rate, she was afraid. The second and final was in an area we could not immediately afford to move into. All we asked was for two weeks grace; while we waited until the required three weeks notice to vacate the privately rented house we were in passed. We were told take the Commission house now or lose it.

When we first attended the local Housing Commission there were people abusing the person at the counter, we were told we had been placed on a list of undesirables, because we had appealed against losing the house. This means if I was to apply for accommodation through the NSW Housing Commission, I would not be considered.

**Carers do not have rights; they are only considered when the needs of the person they care for are considered. Carers often need make decisions for those they care for, and as such their needs should also be included where future requirements and decisions need to be considered.**

I have more, but as I only found out about this Committee today, I have been unable to collect relevant information to include in this submission. If needed I would like to be invited to provide a verbal submission to the Committee.

G.F.I