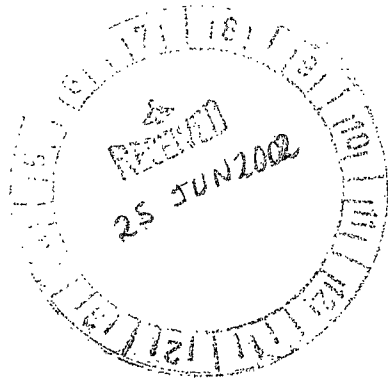


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Dear Ms. Hall,

I am writing to you in response to an article in the Lake Macquarie Post Newspaper regarding submissions to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Ageing.

During the past 3 months our family has been for the 1st time trying to access government help with regards my husbands father and mother who are both 85 years old, my father in law having dementia. Firstly the G.P. filled out a form to have the situation assessed for help in the home for my mother in law, like housework, maybe meals on wheel etc. We have heard nothing, I have tried to phone the number, it is constantly engaged. I am not saying that the people working in the system are not doing their job, what is obvious is the system is under maned and under funded.

To make myself more informed about my father in laws condition I attended an Alzheimer's Australia seminar at Mayfield Ex services club. It really was a shame that both federal and state members were not present, as it was a real education as to what is out in our community. I suggest if you have not already done so, to contact the Alzheimers group, also Dr. Stephen Ticehurst Psycho geriatrician James Fletcher Hospital Newcastle. I have been told that there are 3 people working in the assessment field there is probably about a 3 month waiting list to even get a phone call back that you are on a list. Dr. Ticehurst told those at the seminar that most times there is a crisis for any action to come about.

There does not seem to be a clear pathway for us to follow, no one phone number to coordinate care and help, I believe that a lot of this is, some depts are State responsibility and others are Federal, a lot of waste of resources money and time. If you look at the figures for the next 10 years the outcomes are both frightening and sad. A country that prides itself on looking after its citizens in their twilight years should be able to coordinated simple services that will help keep people in their own homes and together. We are looking at the major health problem of the future and if it is not looked at now and taken into hand then our future old age is not looking too good.

The one main point I wish to put forward is that there must be a clear pathway one phone number that puts the citizens in contact with the resources they need, and then these resources should be available straight

away not in three months when the situation is completely out of hand. If you are diagnosed with diabetes or any other disease then you are put into a system that takes care of you and educates you, with old age and alzheimers you are on your own, trying to work your way through a maze.

Our family are lucky we have people around us to help, I have meet 80 plus men and women trying to handle this on their own and not knowing where to go or should they even be asking for help. One man I meet was living on sandwiches because he didn't know how to cook and his wife was no longer able to.

This is an urgent matter and one the government must look at with eyes wide open.

Your sincerely

Lorraine Elbourne