

27th June 08.

The Committee Secretary

Submission No. 738
(Inq into better support for carers)
AOC 14/7/08

I am one of a vast, silent army of carers who works tirelessly, every day and sometimes throughout the night, of every week of the year. I have been caring for my husband who has epilepsy and a chronic heart condition for 11 years now.

I know my role as a carer is vital to the wellbeing of my husband and our three teenage children. I am the glue that enables us to remain together as a family. My role relieves the government of not only a large financial burden but also relieves other services that are buckling under the weight of demand for them.

The problems I face are:

- isolation and ostracism by extended family and the community.
- long and constant hours of work without the support or relief of a team.
- having to deal with medical emergencies that I have had no training for and am poorly equipped to handle.
- Respite care only looks after the Carer. Because we have children I have never been able to access it in the 11 years I've been a carer.

- Despite my long and constant hours I am not entitled to any type of leave arrangements and have no Superannuation to look forward to
- Since my husband was granted Age Pension and I Wife Age Pension I am no longer eligible for training programs to rejoin the work force or study allowance I am only 45 years old, yet find myself discriminated against in regard to improving my skills and preparing for the time when I will not be a carer.

The government can assist Carers by improved education of Health providers. I was a carer for 5 years before I was informed that I was eligible for Carers Allowance. 5 years of juggling part-time work, raising children and Caring when I needn't have.

Doctors and specialists need to acknowledge and address the Carers wellbeing in regard to the welfare of the Caree. Never has a doctor enquired as to how I am coping, or assessed my ongoing ability to continue. I would suggest Carers be visited in their homes, twice yearly to assist them to maintain their wellbeing, assess their needs.

I feel that Community Health centres with 3
a Doctor, Nurse, Psychologist, Social Worker etc
providing care to the Community, promoting
supporting and educating a broad cross-section
of the community would be highly beneficial
As in the village of old it would engender
wellbeing through establishing meaningful
and enduring connections.

The health system currently is a maze to
navigate. Too compartmentalised, competitive
and divisive.

I also support the continuation of the
Carer Bonus payments each year. Thank you.

yours Sincerely
Hannah.