

ABC 17/7/08

Submission No. 869
(Inq into better support for carers)

15/05/08

To Whom it may concern,

My name is Cheryl, and I am a carer. Basically 24 /7 X 365 days a year, I am on call. I do everything for my husband; fully toilet him, bath him, feed him, water him, clean his teeth, nose, ears, give him a hair cut, shave and manicure, pedicure - whatever his bodily functions are. It is my pleasure, but why do you cut funding to home care services? We don't need less - we need more!

I used to get 2 hrs per week home help, now I have been advised it's being cut back by half an hour each week! There is a lot of needs in home care Government funding doesn't supply - things that don't get taken care of. It's not the fault of our wonderful workers - it's that respite services need more funding. So does homecare!

For Mal (my husband) to go 2 x half days per week, it costs \$25 dollars each time. Recently we were asked to pay even more! Where do we get that from? We get 5 hours per week in home care, and the Government wants us to pay for that too!

We cannot pull any more money out of the money we get! Mal has been my husband of 12 years, and I have spent over 11 of those caring for him. Each year changes as his body deteriorates. The need for care then goes up and yet I find I have to continually fight harder with various departments as things go along. The worst was just for clean care in hospitals!

We are happily married and would like to stay that way, but being on call 24 hours a day is a lot of work. We don't get weekends off either! Mal has a branch of motor neurone disease, and he is also classed as legally blind. He has a sharp mind, and can see a little.

When I put Mal into respite care at our local facility (Milton House), they wanted us to pay for that at \$35 a day! We managed to find the funding the last time. It breaks my heart to put him in there, but I have to take a break sometime for my own sanity. I don't take many breaks, as we cannot get in-home respite, and it takes a week to get him back on an even keel again when he comes home.

We don't get out together much any more because we can't afford a vehicle to suit. We like to travel and go camping, but that is not on now as I can no longer lift Mal into our vehicle.

We try to live as normal as possible, however we do need more permanent Doctors in our town, as well as a dentist. I travel to Roma for the dentist (2hrs to the west) - what a to do to get there for that! And if it's a public holiday we get none of the help we need. Over the Christmas holidays it's even worse.

It only takes something to wear out or break down, and the budget is shot. To go anywhere or do anything takes money - please don't cut funding for the things we need! To simply exist in our homes, one of our biggest worries is support. We shouldn't need to worry about what the Government will hit

next. I'm 53 and Mal is 58. We carers cannot be judged on an over all basis. It is an individual thing, because everyone's situation is different; emotional strain, physical strain etc. For me it is nearly too much, and to even put our loved ones in care is worse. Even our loved ones need holidays too. We like to holiday together occasionally, but that's another story.

Yours sincerely,

Cheryl