

10th June, 2008

Submission No. 55
(Inq into better support for carers)
A.O.C. 16/6/08

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth

Dear Secretary

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.

I feel that my role is very demanding and time consuming and takes a lot of effort sometimes to keep going. It is that bad that some days you just feel that you want to get in the car and drive and never come back.

I feel I contribute to Australian society by helping save all the taxpayers money.

The problems that I face are numerous as in we have no family support in Canberra as all relatives are in another state. There are no facilities in Canberra to accommodate my partner as he is too young for the homes. In the past 3 years I have had a total of 6 days off on my own.

Every second day my partner has to have dialysis for approximately 6 hours and with the cost of fuel instead of having time at home whilst he is at the dialysis unit I have to stay with him otherwise spend money that we haven't got on more fuel travelling.

I do not have a social life at all and if I did we could not afford it. We are financially stretched and finding it getting worse because of the cost of food and fuel these days. We now need the pension weekly not fortnightly.

I would like to be able to work part time but who is going to hire me between the hours of 7pm till 10.30pm. That is the only possible time after caring for my partner all day.

The things that stress me about being a carer the most are that you have to be there all the time. There is no time for yourself, if you manage to fit in "me" time it is for a very limited time. Besides looking after my partner I have to wash, iron, cook, grocery shop, mow lawns, edge lawns, trim garden, vacuum, get medications, give medications, shower and dress partner, take him to dialysis four times a week and the list goes on.

I worry about my future because I don't have one.

I think the Government can better help Carers by paying us more than a miserly 50.00 per week. They should walk in our shoes and live our lives for a few weeks.

I'm sure they would change their minds and give us the respect that we deserve.

All Carers are saving the Government billions in health care because we keep our loved ones at home. If we all put our loved ones in a home or hospital imagine the costs then.

Thank you for taking my views into consideration as part of the Committee's inquiry. I look forward to reviewing any recommendations you make to improve life for Carers in Australia.

Yours sincerely

Kerry