

2nd July 2008-07-02

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing & Youth
PO Box 6021
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Submission No. 1090

(Inq into better support for carers)

AUG 28/108

Dear Secretary

I wish to make a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing & Youth's enquiry into Better Support for Carers.

I contribute to Australian society by having full time care of my 31 yr old son who has Downs Syndrome.

I am a Director on the Board of Glenray, a supported industry that employs 60 people with disabilities.

I am on "The Bathurst Carers Voice" a lobby group that is trying to improve the lives of Carers & their dependants.

I am a member of the Bathurst Community Transition Team that tries to assist people with moving from school into the community.

So I have little time to have any social life for myself.

I am a single aged pensioner and as we live 25km out of Bathurst it is very expensive for me to travel to town just to shop. There isn't any public transport here and a taxi costs \$55 a trip. My son works three days a week at the Glenray Laundry so it now costs \$16 a day just to get him to & from work let alone any trips in & out of town to get respite.

My health is, at 70 yrs of age declining and I worry as to what will happen to my son when I can no longer care for him or I die. Glenray is working on building a Retirement Home for its workers but we will need a lot of funding from DADHC to get our scheme under way.

The government has been trying for years to get us the close the Hostel we own but as they couldn't supply housing for all out tenants we have been allowed to keep it open. But because of the policy we have not been allowed to back-fill the empty beds. So we have been running the hostel without the extra money that 4 more people would pay and turning away desperate people who needed the rooms.

Considering how many billions of dollars we carers save the government we get little support for what we do.

The situation for respite in Bathurst is dire. The only respite available to me is two hours on Mondays, five on Thursdays and four on Saturdays. I know that each of these groups have a waiting list that given extra government money would mean they could accommodate all the ones on the list.

I have a friend with a VERY severely disabled son who has to drive to Sydney to get respite, a three hour drive. So what can she do with the

respite time? Go shopping and then drive back to Bathurst?

Wonderful!!!!

I have another friend who is caring for a severely handicapped 18 mth old baby that has to be tube fed. She can't even attend Carers' meetings or morning teas as there's no respite available at those times.

So top of my list for urgently facilities is a staffed respite house in Bathurst and the petrol money for people who live a long way out of town to be able to access it when needed.

Next on my list, is the million dollars needed for Glenray to turn its hostel into a home/care unit so the Glenray people on retirement don't have to go into old people's homes hundreds of miles from where they have lived all their lives. We have been given a grant to start the planning for it.

Here's hoping we'll get the million dollars needed to put the plan into operation. Then I won't have to worry about what happens to my son when I am unable to care for him. So at least I have something to work towards. Many are not so lucky as their folk don't work at Glenray.

It is disgraceful that so many young folk with disabilities are in totally unsuitable places. It's about time the government provided accommodation for them befitting their age and care levels.

Yours faithfully

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Gwenda :