

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2008-06-24

A.O.C. 7(7)08  
Submission No. 550  
(Inq into better support for carers)

Inquiry into Better Support for Carers  
Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth  
P.O. Box 6021  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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.

My husband and I care for our eight year old daughter who has Autism. My husband works full time and I am in my third year of a Bachelor of Social Work at University which I have been studying part time for the last four years. When I graduate I wish to work professional with carers of those with a disability and have for the last six years volunteered working with carers of those on the Autism Spectrum.

Our daughter's disability has major impacts of all aspects of our life. Structured and rigid routines are a part of our everyday life and are rarely deviated from due to the high levels of anxiety our daughter experiences. Our daughter's behaviours are quite challenging and she is constantly being taught communication and social skills that come naturally to those without this disability. Relationships with friends and family are strained with the difficult behaviours our daughter displays and the ongoing pressures in caring for our daughter. These pressures also impact on our family as a unit and it is difficult to spend time together as couple due to the lack of support available to us.

We find it difficult to manage financially due medical costs and therapies associated in gaining some kind of normality in our daughter's life. Educational opportunities for us as carers are also limited due to their lack of accessibility both geographically and financially.

Practical measures that would better support us in assisting our child would include funding assistance in accessing educational opportunities for us as carers, access to respite and therapies that are available however due to the cost are not accessible.

Thankyou for considering my input and I look forward to viewing the recommendations made in order to improve support for careers.

Yours sincerely,

SHARON