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A.O.C. 27/6/08  
Submission No. 188  
(Inq into better support for carers)

Committee Secretary  
Inquiry into Better Support for Carers  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family,  
Community, Housing and Youth  
PO Box 6021  
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.

As a Carer, I know that my role is so very important & that I need to do everything possible to help my little boy develop to his full potential. I feel that as a parent of a child who has been diagnosed as having an Autistic Spectrum Disorder I have a great responsibility to do & try what every is available to me, as it may in some way improve my sons outcome which is the most important thing in the world to me but in turn would also benefit the community at large.

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I face the following problems: financing all the different Therapies & extra requirements my son needs to help in his positive development. I am Finding it difficult to get part time/casual work due to the restriction in time I can give to a potential employer as I also need to be available to my son to take him to his different Therapies etc.

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I need help with financing all the Therapies etc that my son needs. I also feel parents should be given way more guidance & help in the very early stages of being told of a diagnosis similar to my sons. A plan of attack needs to be given to the parents ie. A leaflet could be handed out to the parents detailing all the places they need to contact & what will be helpful to them going forward. There would be Centrelink Details (on Payments available), Medicare (for info on Care Plans etc) Disabilities Services Qld (in my case for children under 6), ATO (if there are any rebates available for carers) Speech Therapists that Specialize in teaching children with ASD in your area, Autism Qld details, Minds & Hearts at West End Qld details, Early Childhood Development Units in your area, Diet information for children on the spectrum & contacts with regards to this, Therapeutic Listening Programs etc. My husband & I were told of a few places to contact but you are so shell shocked by the news that your head is spinning & you are just too confused trying to remember everything so if this information was in a leaflet form to be handed out it would be a great help.

Even now 1 year down the track I am finding it very hard to work out what is available to me through Medicare, centrelink & ATO no body seems to know what is available to claim when you call for information & the web pages are not user friendly. You can't just look up carer & it list all that is available to you.

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I think the Government can better help Carers by financing more, children need your help, I receive \$100.60 per fortnight (carers allowance) to help with costs & my son has a health care card but this does not cover many things for him. We are trying all sorts of therapies to help our son & they are all very expensive. Through the government we receive 5 discounted therapies per calendar year but this is no where near enough as he is having approximately 1 per week, we are struggling on one wage because I am the primary carer & I do not receive any payment to do this. The government is going on about an Education Revolution well when are children on the spectrum going to be given their share of the funds to educate them, they need it just as much as the regular kids do & they still have a lot to offer society.

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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

**Maria**