



A.O.C. 1/7/08

Submission No. 354  
(Inq into better support for carers)

**SUBMISSION FROM**

Val [unclear]

Registered Carer for approximately 15 years  
Involved with Carers WA for 4 to 5 years  
State Registered Nurse Midwife Western Australia

**ATTENTION TO**

Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on family, Community, Housing and Youth  
PO Box 6021  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
AUSTRALIA

# Submission Better Support For Carers

## **As a Carer, I feel that my role is**

One that has been "given" to me with out warning, preparation or insight as to how I as a wife can fulfill the role as a carer.

The enormous responsibility to undertake a Carer role is at times rewarding it is also detrimental to your own well-being and health.

To give my husband the support and quality of life he deserves is important to me.

There was a change in roles when an equal partnership becomes that of Carer and "consumer" (This is a title that I DETEST. You do not consume ill health) this did not happen easily and is still ongoing even after a decade of caring.

## **I face the following problems**

Every minute of the day having to organize myself as well as doing the same for my husband.

Learning to readjust to his short-term memory loss

Having to re-enforce and plan ahead with everyday ADLS

i.e. Doctors appointment ,visiting a friend , putting the rubbish bin out, change of clean underwear .

Living with his negative attitude

Finding the best medical support. Then waiting weeks for the appointment. In the meantime you have struggled through the crisis and somehow both survive.

Knowing when to step in and make decisions or when it is better to back off.

Having to take over all the financial business.

Realizing to be able to cope as a Carer I needed counseling.

That to cope I have isolated myself from friends and family.

I don't want to do it 24/7

Respite is not always appropriate or possible in our case.

Being told "we are too busy" not how can we help?

Dealing with Centre link: Communication leaves a lot to be desired. Being treated with distrust, contempt, disbelieved, told to hurry up as the next appointment is waiting... after you have been waiting 2 hours without an appointment when told prior to coming that appointments aren't made anymore. No privacy when giving personal information at the front counter. Complaints department then need a call once home again. The need to ring my pay fortnightly and then being questioned at the different pay amount (I'm a midwife parttime)

Having to explain what an EPA is and no that your husband is unable to deal with this and yes he does have a disability and no it will never improve and yes it is both physical and mental health and no it is not your right to further information about his personal issues and what the hell is what bed we do or do not sleep in do with Center link

Health professionals who have little or poor concept of a Carers role. As a Carers Representative I am able to put the role and needs of a Carer forward this a big step forward and we are now being heard(but education of all health professionals need to learn these life skills early in their career.)

## **I need help with**

Currently I am able to cope on a daily basis but as we are now in our sixties the need for outside support will be an issue in the future

**I think the government can better help Carers by**

Understanding that continuity of all professionals no matter what area of expertise is essential for better outcomes. Case workers and their team are null and void when the continual changing i.e. deployment or personal leave changes continue to undermine the security of trust and continuity essential for the care for all health care clients.

When making contact on behalf of my husband the constant change has an unsettling effect with the need to re-explain etc what is required. My husband can't or won't let it go and can make life difficult and stressful for all concerned when having to accept another change of contact.

Today's world of deployment, sorry I'm new, no I'm leaving next month, no you need to speak to. This to an already struggling to cope Carer causes stress to both carer and family.

Getting real about fixing the health system

**PREVENTION**

**PREVENTION**

**PREVENTION**

Have government funded 'Well PERSONS Clinics" prevention is the key, keep things simple we are getting to carried away with the big picture once it has become fractured.

Needed in these clinic should be a holistic approach and assessment with follow up to GP / Family Doctor

Dental                      Physical  
Podiatry                    History ( examples)  
Hearing                    BMI  
Sight

Health and well being is an enormous task and if we were to slow down and try to slowly to prevent some of the issues which cause mental and physical health issues.eg

Substance abuse;with no tolerance to drugs

Too many processed food additives, fast food

Review the statistics available Emergency department are blocked by life style clients eg "ICE" and psychosis

Unfortunately we live in the fast lane and very few people stop and try to understand the needs of those of different generations or cultures

Some where in the system of education /training we have lost the adaptation of our knowledge and the ability to understand people and to be non judgmental when dealing with person's of special needs.

Better practice methods

Out there are some very special people who have the "mix right" and it is a joy to know them .

I have not tried to address the terms of reference but I have put my personal thoughts and experience forward

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

Val

21 06 2008