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Submission No. 860
(Inq into better support for carers)

4th of July 2008

Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee
On Family, Community, Housing and Youth
P.O. Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Secretary,

I would like to take the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry into The Better Support for Carers.

My wife was diagnosed with MS in 1990, it is a disease that can slowly steal a life away, and plans for the future are all changed, although it does take a while to realize this. MS can take away the dexterity in the hands, the ability to drive a car, to walk; it can take away a career and change aspects of a person's character. However, in the vast number of cases MS not found away to take an individuals humor or the desire to fight against it. My wife is the epitome of this resolve.

When you become a full time carer, 2002 in my case, apart from dealing with all the daily domestic duties, medical problems and appointments, your roll expands. A few of the extra responsibilities include, nutritional care but you are not a Dietitian. Doing your best to maintain your dependents fitness and health, but you are not a Physio and the Carers Payment does not seem to recognize these assets.

I believe when you become a Carer, Centrelink approved, that a Case Manager should be appointed immediately. You have no idea of what funding or services are available or who provides them. What is best suited to your current situation and what happens when that changes? If you choose one source of funding for in home support, will it impact on Continance assistance [CAAS] or Victorian Aids & Equipment Program [VA&EP]?

By the time you become a full time Carer your financial situation has changed dramatically. Two salaries can become one and then it progresses to two pensions. Superauation contributions dry up; the long term financial future becomes uncertain. Could the Commonwealth set up

and contribute to a Carers Super Fund? This would be of special importance to Carers who have taken early retirement to care for their partners who may pass away before they access the Aged Pension.

Another area of financial stress, apart from increasing fuel prices is the cost of long term parking at Hospitals, this can add up to a large annual Figure. Could some consideration be given to a monthly or quarterly reimbursement upon presentation of a validated receipt?

Finally, more short and long term Respite facilities for dependents; so that they better accommodate people with similar degrees disability.

Thank you for opportunity to present my thoughts.

Yours Sincerely,