

## Submission No. 876.1

(Better support for carers)

AOC 6/1/09

Hon Jenny Macklin,  
Minister Families, Housing,  
Community Services & Indigenous Affairs  
Parliament House  
Canberra. ACT 2600

Dear Minister Macklin,

For far too long Caring Families have been denied a voice that will ensure we have a say about matters which directly affect our lives. I am writing to tell you that it is my belief that Disability Family Advocacy must be funded by the Australian government to remove current discrimination, which denies to Caring families a voice to government at all levels.

Caring families ask for nothing more than a level playing field with the disability self advocacy sector and service provider peaks. We ask for a funded place at the policy and planning table because families deliver over 93% of all the supported accommodation and personal care needs of children and adults with dependent disabilities. We have no voice and that is not fair.

I believe it is wrong that Caring families have been shut out of the very processes of government, which control the quality of our lives, leaving family carers and our family members with dependant disabilities, without a voice. Carer family advocacy must be funded as a matter of fairness, with families having a say about who they want to represent them.

I believe that government cannot have it both ways. Government cannot continue to expect us to provide 'free' services to kin with dependant disabilities whilst we are forced to remain silent on their needs and the needs of our extended families who often suffer greatly because of the intensity of our care role.

Service providers and disability self advocates cannot provide open and accountable advocacy, because there will always be a conflict of interest between their vested interests and the interests of carers. The very nature and demands of the care role isolates carers. To ensure a successful outcome for carers the Carer Family Advocacy Network must begin at the regional level and progress to state and then national peak bodies, which are elected by carer families themselves.

Thankfully we live in a democracy. A true democracy supports the aspirations of its entire people. A true democracy has elected representatives who both listen and are accountable to each and every one of us. This is why Carers Family Advocacy MUST be funded and MUST be democratic.

I ask that you take immediate action to put right this hurtful wrong and give carers a voice. Please fund Disability Family Advocacy at a regional, State and National level now.

Best Wishes

Signed:

