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Submission No. 1007

(Inq into better support for carers)

Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth  
PO 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.

**The Committee is seeking a better understanding of the situation for Carers in Australia. Use any or all of the following starting points to help you write your letter:**

I feel that my role was not considered by my employer. I have been treated the same as any other employee without responsibilities. It became too hard to compete in the workplace to keep up. It ended up I was forced to resign under the threat of termination. They disregarded the SA Carers Recognition Act because it was a Commonwealth System.

I contribute to Australian society by working and managing a person with a major health issue and including him within the family unit. Far more expensive if he was managed entirely by an institution. This also would be against his self interest and personal opinions at the moment. Ideally it would be better to allow him to have his own accommodation and control over own life but this may not be achievable.

I face the following problems. It will be difficult to have a career of any sort since even the public service could not make allowances for my responsibilities. What hope is there of the private sector being able to make allowances for Carers. Openly I agreed to drop salary and position and was told verbally they could accommodate my family responsibilities. They introduced a new performance scheme that had the effect of terminating my employment after 25 years so much for a family friendly workplace. I am now out of work. They have done this to deny access to a redundancy payment.

I can't fully participate in social life because ...I am required to work around his acute needs. The family members need to continually re arrange social plans to allow for our sons individual health needs. We do our best to utilize available support and respite from available funding methods.

I am financially struggling because of ...The continual drain of medical requirements drugs and visits to specialists and GP to maintain our son and now with age and my own needs. It is not possible to allow time to attend to own fitness and health needs.

I would like to work (full-time or part-time) but have the following issues to deal with ...The failure of adequate support systems to assist with care of our son. The contract arrangements of the respite is not flexible enough to enable our family to have uninhibited individual and

equal lives as other members of the community.

I worry about my future because ... I now face hardship due to falling income and only a bleak prospect of finding compassion in our society for chances of more employment. My superannuation will stagnate and place long term financial hardship in the future due to it now being eroded. This is largely due to my accepting the role of major Carer for our son and the failure of the system to protect Carers.

The things that stress me the most about being a Carer are ...The constant pressure to manage the daily dramas without becoming angry at the changing social systems. For example you select a provider and find the user friendliness changes to increasing demands on our family to supply more information and a rigid no consultative approach prevails.

The increasing demands on the facilitator funding and service provider leads to the perception that they are attempting to hinder more than help the family during the respite process. Each provider wants more medical intervention and increased paperwork such as changing medications create a visit to the doctors to get demanded specific not generic medication sheets. A single form is not accepted by Non Government respite providers.

**Remember that it will help the Committee to understand your point if you can support it with examples from your own experience.**

**The Committee would also like to hear of any ideas, solutions or strategies that will support you in providing care. Use any or all of the following suggestions for getting started:**

I need help with [getting a good life for Kristopher] and think that [improving support for Carers] would be the best solution for me.

I need to have [understanding providers and methods of financial supports] and this would help me because it would enable me to ... Continue to reduce the stresses for the person we care for. To try to include him in the community and not isolate him further. As we age it seems things are getting harder not easier we will require more help in the future not less.

I think the Government can better help Carers by ...legislation to protect human rights for people with disabilities and that inhibit discrimination against Carers. To continue to look at things that will deliver more options and assistance to Carers to function that administer support to allow improved self centred care to the individual with the disability. There is no one size fits all across the spectrum of afflictions so it is going to be an ongoing need to listen to this group.

Keeping Carers in work might be possible by the creation of an employment office with powers to assist and place Carers in flexible workplaces. They would then be able to harness the skills that would then not be lost to the employment market. It may be too late for me but the public service would be seen to offer flexibility what has gone wrong in the last few years? The attacks on working people and workplace rights that have spread like a poison in our society the Australian people validated this concept at the 2008 Election.

**Remember that it will help the Committee to understand your idea if you can support it with reasons that it will work or examples of things it will help you to achieve.**

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

[Sign your name here]

***Kevin***