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Debbie

Submission No. 861  
(Inq into better support for carers)

Secretary  
Inquiry into Better Support for Carers  
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.

AGE: 54years, MOTHER: 30years, CARER:25years  
CHILDREN: 30years, 27years, 25 years  
MY WORKING LIFE- 15-24 years of age  
EXPERIENCE- typist, solicitors office- bank officer- Accounts Finance Comp.

When my youngest daughter was at school I never knew whether she was going to be there all day or not. My life revolved around hers. My second daughter was a chronic asthmatic from 2-14 years of age. The major barrier I experienced at this time was how I was going to work with two children needing constant care. Family did not live close to help. To maintain our family needs the only solution at the time was to rely on a single income. When my husband retires we will find it difficult financially as we will still have a daughter to support.

At 54 years of age I have devoted 30 years of my life to supporting my family needs and the ongoing needs of my youngest child with an intellectual disability. Since 2002 our daughter has received a DSQ package for post school options which allows for 12-15hrs care a week. This has been very successful both for my daughter as an individual and I as her designated full time carer.

Over the last few years I have pursued an interest in aged care as best I could in volunteering for RSL Home Care. I would like to further develop my experience in this field by gaining certified qualifications at TAFE for aged care and find employment. A barrier that is currently holding me back is similar to the barrier I experienced when my children were young – how am I going to work when I am the primary carer for my 25 year old daughter?

In discussions with some employers in the home and community field I was given the impression that in order to gain employment and show my commitment I must make myself available during full time work hours. There appeared to be limited flexibility in these times. With the care requirements for my daughter this is not only impractical but impossible. With this in mind, the practical measure that I can see to better support me in gaining employment would be additional in home respite that cover the required working hours.

Thank you for taking my views into consideration as part of the Committee's Inquiry. I look forward to reviewing the recommendations you make in order to improve support for carers.

Yours sincerely,

Debbie