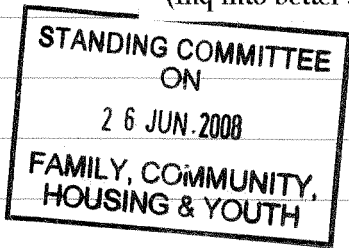


Submission No. 552

A.O.C. 7/7/08

(Inq into better support for carers)



Dear Sirs,

I am a carer. My wife was diagnosed with Parkinson's over 4 years ago. To complicate our own lives, I also have cancer.

Last year I attended a carer's seminar at the RACV where the then Federal Minister said "if all the carers in Australia stopped what they were doing, our social welfare system would collapse." Of course that won't happen, because, as most carers will tell you why they do it, the answer is always, because it has to be done.

2

ONLY ANOTHER CARER CAN REALLY UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEMS + THE STRAIN OF 24/7 CARING.

I WOULD JUST LIKE TO TALK ABOUT "THE PRACTICAL MEASURES REQUIRED TO BETTER SUPPORT CARERS - - - - -."

WHILST MONEY IS ALWAYS CAREFULLY APPRECIATED + IS MOST NECESSARY, THE ONE THING THAT ALL CARERS SEEM TO ASK FOR IS -

GIVE US A BREAK!

I OF COURSE AM WELL AWARE OF RESPIRE CARE AVAILABLE, BUT THIS CAN SOMETIMES BE DIFFICULT TO ACCESS (UNLESS AN EMERGENCY). BECAUSE OF OUR AGES, MY WIFE 69, ME 73 WE WOULD GO TO A RESPIRE HOME WITH MUCH MORE ELDERLY PEOPLE. THESE CENTRES, OR AT LEAST THE ONES I KNOW, ARE MOST CARING, HELPFUL + PROFESSIONAL.

(3)

BUT IF YOU HAVE AN ACUTE WIND, LIKE MY WIFE, THE ENVIRONMENT CAN BE SOUL DESTROYING. IN THIS SITUATION, THE CARER FEELS VERY GUILTY FOR INSTITUTIONALISING THEIR PARTNER, JUST SO THEY CAN HAVE A BREAK.

I BELONG TO THE CARER'S ASSOCIATION, PARKING'S AUSTRALIA, A PARKINSON SUPPORT GROUP & GROUP CALLED BRAINLINK WHICH IS ATTACHED TO THE MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS ORGANISATION IN MELBOURNE. THEY HAVE A WONDERFUL SCHEME, WHICH TAKES CARERS ALONE, WITH THEIR PARTNERS OR THE SUPPORTERS THEMSELVES, AWAY FOR A 3 DAY BREAK, WHILE ALSO ARRANGING RESPIRE IF NECESSARY. THEY ALSO HAVE ONE OFF DAYS FOR GOLF | MOVIES | THEATRE ETC.

THIS SCHEME IS SUPERB BUT VERY LIMITED. AT THE MOMENT BRAINLINK

A

CAN ONLY LOOK AFTER ABOUT 500 FAMILIES IN THE VAST EASTERN/NORTHERN PARTS OF MELBOURNE.

YOU ARE PROBABLY WELL AWARE OF THIS ORGANISATION ALREADY, BUT AS A RECIPIENT OF THEIR FINE WORK, I WOULD ASK THAT YOU LOOK AT BRAINKINK + SIMILAR PEOPLE WITH THE VIEW OF EXPANDING THEIR WORK, SO MORE CARER'S CAN BE HELPED TO

HAVE A BREAK.

I REMAIN
YOURS FAITHFULLY

JOHN