

Submission No. 572

(Inq into better support for carers)

Rotary Club of Mount Eliza Inc.

ABN 91 768 039 674 Reg. No. A 13405 T

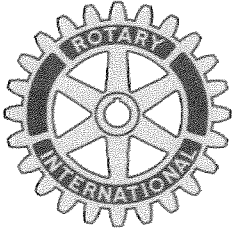
P O Box 95, Mt. Eliza, Victoria 3930, Australia

2008-2009

President: Frank Flowers

Secretary: John Paterson

30th June, 2008.



The Committee Secretary,
Inquiry into Better Support for Carers.
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth,
P.O. Box 6021,
Parliament House,
Canberra. A.C.T. 2600.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find enclosed our Submission to the Inquiry into Better Support for Carers, which was also emailed today to fchy.reps@aph.gov.au.

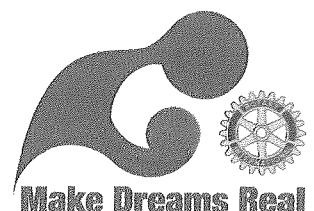
We look forward to your favourable acceptance of our Submission.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Harvey".

Paul Harvey – Past President.

Encl.



Rotary Club of Mount Eliza

Submission to the Inquiry Into Better Support for Carers

To the Committee Secretary,
Inquiry Into Better Support for Carers,
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family,
Community, Housing and Youth, P.O. Box 6021,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA. A.C.T. 2600.

fchy.reps@aph.gov.au

Submission for Inquiry into Better Support for Carers

We, as the Rotary Club of Mount Eliza, are submitting to the inquiry a support paper for Young Carers.

Our Club is directly involved with Carers Victoria. We help the organisation by raising money toward a Young Carers Scholarship Fund. The Scholarships are allocated to young carers in secondary schools. In the past three years we have unearthed an area of great need amongst these young people.

Who are young carers?

Young carers are children and young people (12 – 25 years) caring for a family member. Usually this is a parent or sibling with a disability, mental illness or chronic health problem.

Many young carers live in single parent, low income families. Their responsibilities are high and they find it a struggle to maintain their schoolwork, friendships and interests. Too often they are isolated, lack the necessary support networks and drop out of school.

Young carers have lower educational outcomes and fewer opportunities in life than their peers.

Empowering young carers to achieve

The Young Carers Scholarship Program helps young carers in secondary school to develop skills, knowledge and abilities that will support them in their education. It offers financial assistance with the costs of curricula and extra-curricula activities, as well as direct educational expenses.

Young carer scholarships:

- Validate and recognise the important role young carers have
- Encourage young carers to persist with their schooling
- Support young carers to maintain friendships and develop support networks
- Provide an opportunity to learn new skills
- Help relieve financial burden at home
- Empower young carers to dream large and achieve their goals

The Young Carer Scholarship Program also develops awareness of young carers and their needs within school communities. It helps reach 'hidden' young carers and importantly links them into services and support available.

The Young Carer Scholarship Program Today

Unfortunately, our program is extremely limited due to the demand and need far outstripping the funds available. We are currently endeavouring to have other Rotary Clubs support the scholarships but this process will take a few years. In an ideal world we would like to be able to provide all young carers with Young Carer Scholarships. These young people need our support. If the Federal and State Governments could provide substantial funding one of the benefits for these young people

would be to allow them to stay at school without the worry of the high cost of education. This is especially important as the vast majority of young carers come from low socioeconomic and single parent households.

As you would be aware young carers attending school are not eligible for certain funding because they attend school for the specified number of hours in an instructional day. This makes their plight grim indeed. Many young carers find it extremely difficult to continue their education. With the help of Carers Victoria we have generated a substantial database over three years which builds and identifies the needs of these young people. Our Scholarship Program assists secondary students in various practical ways. We have

- Provided the money towards school fees and subject materials
- Assisted with the purchase of uniform and clothing for particular subjects
- Helped students attend camps, excursions and attend special events; e.g. The Alpine School
- Assisted with the purchase of laptops and software
- Enabled extra tuition for some students in a range of subjects
- Assisted with drama, sport and music fees and equipment

The Rotary Young Carer Scholarships are as special as the young people across Victoria who receive them. These young people would often be ineligible for mainstream assistance. In making contact with these carers for scholarships the Carers Victoria team have been able to link young carers with other carer support agencies. From our research we have also found that we could improve how young carers are identified in schools. Often schools do not have adequate resources and personnel to assist these young people and they are left unnoticed. We would recommend funding be made available to assist teachers, administrators and student wellbeing coordinators become better informed about young carers by way of professional development forums Australia wide. The carer's organisations could do this information sharing if they were provided with the funding for professionals to visit schools and regional conferences. In an ideal world schools could be provided with extra support grants according to how many young carers attend that school.

Our Vision for the Young Carer Scholarship Program

While the benefits of the Young Carer Scholarship Program are clear, unfortunately this Program is not being maximised. Currently only a small section of young carers can access this support.

Our vision is for all young carers to be eligible for the Young Carer Scholarship Program. We want to increase access, reach more young carers and have a greater impact on their lives.

To achieve this, we will:

- Extend the Scholarship Program to include young carers in primary school and tertiary studies
- Promote more widely to reach more 'hidden' young carers
- Increase promotion of the Scholarship Program to teachers, community workers, etc., about young carers and the issues they face, as well as the services/support available
- Broaden the scope of scholarships (what can be applied for)
- Revise the application criteria (to include young carers who currently do not fit the guidelines)

We, as the Rotary Club of Mount Eliza, feel very strongly that these young people deserve recognition and support for the difficult role they have in the community. We would be only too happy to provide further input and assistance to the Inquiry. In managing the Scholarship Fund we have gained valuable information and knowledge regarding the enormity of the young carer's problem.

We can assist by:

- Providing data and case studies to illustrate the severity of the problem
- Explaining the barriers faced by young carers in gaining an education
- Providing practical ideas that support young carers
- Assisting government in how funding could be best administered so that it is used for the carers education and special needs. The model we are using for the Scholarship Fund is exemplary.

Thank you for reading our submission and taking our views into consideration as part of the Committee's Inquiry. We look forward to reviewing any recommendations you make to improve the life of young carers in Australia

Yours sincerely,

Signature: Paul Harvey

Print Name: Paul Harvey, Past President, Rotary Club of Mount Eliza

Date: 30th June, 2008.

Postal Address: P.O. Box 95, Mt. Eliza. Vic. 3930.

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