

Committee Secretary
Inquiry into Better Support for Carers
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family,
Community, Housing and Youth
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

30 JUN 2008

Submission No. 616
(Inq into better support for carers)

A.O.C. 8/7/08

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.

I am submitting to the Inquiry because...

My husband and I care for our 6 year old daughter with Cystic Fibrosis. She was diagnosed at birth and we commenced managing her health at 4 weeks of age and will be doing so for the rest of her life.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

1. The role and contribution of carers in society

As a carer, I feel that my role is...

To maximise quality of life; to create opportunity for her in life as you would for any other healthy child. To assist her to make sense of her world in light of her chronic condition as she grows up.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

2. The barriers to social and economic participation for carers

As a carer, I face the following problems ...

Loss of income for a much longer period of time than ever intended. Difficulty committing to an employer long term due to likely interruptions in working life because of caring duties and hospital admissions.

Superannuation contributions have been stopped and/or reduced. I have been trying to make additional contributions whilst having only casual work.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

3. The practical measures required to better support carers

As a carer, I need help with ...

When Zoe goes through intense periods of illness I need help with housework. We used to be eligible for Council home help but this was stopped when she commenced 3 year old kinder and we were offered respite care and child minding services instead which were not useful to us at all. When Zoe goes into hospital, she stays for two weeks at a time – minimum. I stay with her for most of that time and my husband stays for some days. By the time I get back home, I have a whole house to re-organise and try and catch up with washing, cleaning the toilet, bathroom, etc. My husband works long hours and only just manages to get our other daughter organised and off to school every day. He comes in to see Zoe after work every second day at least. If it weren't for my parents who are in their late 60s and late 70s, I literally would not survive these times. They care for me, the carer,

by helping out with washing, cleaning and picking my daughter up from school – every day when we stay at RCH. When we come home from hospital we normally embark on 3 months of intensive treatment at home which leaves barely enough time to get to school on time and get a decent meal cooked for the family. I need practical assistance in these circumstances.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

4. Strategies to assist carers to access opportunities and choices

I think the Government can better help carers by ...

Incentive for employers to employ carers with flexible working conditions

Opportunity for primary carers to keep work skills up to date so they can either keep working or make a transition back to work at some point a little easier.

Government contributions to some degree, whilst in receipt of carer payments or pension. Whilst it is acknowledged verbally that 'carers' play a vital role in our community and that we end up saving the tax payer millions, I do think the government should be encouraged to continue to make at least minimum payments to Super so that when your carer role one day comes to an end, you are not left facing a miserable pension life.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

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

Trish

Date

18/6/08