

Submission No. 774

(Inq into better support for carers)

AOC 15/7/08

Sent: Tuesday, 1 July 2008 12:32 AM
To: Committee, FCHY (REPS)
Subject: Inquiry into better support for Carers

Committee Secretary, Standing Committee on Family, Housing and Youth
PO Box 6021
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Parliamentary Secretary,
please find the following points as my submission to Inquiry into better support for carers:

1. the role and contribution of carers in society and how this should be recognized

I have cared for my son with multiple disabilities for 30 years. I have been called a hero! I never wanted to be one. I never wanted to be a divorced mother to a child with disabilities. I love my son, so there is only one thing to do, to look after him the best I can. The contribution I have made towards my son's welfare is immeasurable. The contribution I have made to society in monetary form can be calculated in very large figures.

Governments should be the leaders in recognition of carers whether parents, other relatives or doing a paid job by caring. The profile of caregivers is low in Australia.

2. the barriers to social and economic participation for carers, with particular focus on helping carers find and/or retain employment

Did part-time work. My son took so much of my time and energy, with no regular support and no money to pay anyone, I had to give up. I tried to see friends, belong to a church group, volunteer as I could. Over time all this has been less and less. My health physically and mentally has become an issue.

Some carers could work outside the caring environment but some would find it impossible. The financial and other support should be according to person's needs. Finding employment is not as hard as finding and retaining flexible employment to coincide with a caring role.

3. the practical measures required to better support carers, including key priorities for action

Over the years my son has acquired more disabilities than were obvious when he was born. This has been hard thus affecting my physically and mental state. I am getting on with years and find thinking of the future a lot.

What is desperately needed are: "pure" respite houses - not used as long term temporary

places -, well managed, permanent homes according to the needs of the persons with disabilities (not according to the whims and fancies of the ruling bureaucracy).

4. strategies to assist carers to make choices as the wider community, including
stargazes
to increase the capacity for carers to make choices within their caring roles,
transition
into and out of caring and effectively plan for the future.

After my son was born it became more and more obvious that we (my then husband and I) will never have "normal" family life. I did not only become a mother but a carer for life. As long I am or my son is alive I am a carer. Weather my son lives with me or not, I am still a carer.

Carers do not have same choices as the wider community. The only way to improve the lives/jobs of anyone who is a carer is for government to start the ball rolling by injecting enough money to: - acquire accommodation(respite, permanent), raise the standard of staff training, pay higher wages, raise the carer payment, offer other financial assistance, offer physical assistance, educate society.

Yours Sincerely

Saara