

REC 21/7/08

Submission No. 962
(Inq into better support for carers)

To:

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

9 July 2008

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 a carer of my wife and feel that my carer role contributes to Australian society mainly to reduce the working pressure on hospitals, nursing homes and in the greater Australian health care system. There is no second guessing that caring by close relatives is a boon to any patient in need of extensive daily care; with close relatives and family around to support those in need, greatly alleviating the burden on our societies health care system and markedly improving the patients recovery or support.

The things that strike me the most about being a carer are that as a single person responsible for the caring of my wife both day and night, have left me isolated from general social life. There is no change in environment, no leisure time, any holidays or break for me. Under these circumstances, I suggest that to reduce the strain in any carer's life, a program such as a weekend away or holiday away from home is of an utmost importance.

It enables carers to take a break from the stresses of daily life, whilst keeping the patient in a safe and supported environment – altogether enhancing self-confidence and working capacity. However at present carers rarely get a chance to make use of this facility in their carer life due to a lack of funds allocated the program organisers. This facility must be made available to each and every carer once a year.

In addition to the strains of caring for our loved ones, we have to deal with financial hardships since our main source of income is a government pension or benefit. In my case, my only source of income is the special benefit for my wife, and the carer payment for me. I am financially struggling to deal with the current environment, where inflationary pressures are making daily necessities very

expensive. Proper financial support is the best solution for my family. My income is well below the minimum wage of the country.

Thank for taking my views into consideration as part of the committees inquiry. I look forward to reviewing any recommendations you make to improve life for carers in Australia.

Warm regards,

Lakshmi