

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

AOC 21/7/08

Submission No. 970
(Inq into better support for carers)

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...

Over the last 18 years, I've been caring for my autistic son and personally bring in limited to no income each calendar year. I'm self employed and found it almost impossible to do any work.

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...

being neglected by the government of this developed country. My wife and I try to care for our son to the best of our abilities. She is a full time teacher for over two decades. Last year (2007) she took a year off work to support me but had to go back full time this year due to financial difficulty.

2. The barriers to social and economic participation for carers

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

- not enough adequate respite. We're getting 2 nights off a month (sometimes 4 nights over 3 months) depending on the availability of Respite accommodation.
- Not very encouraging for our son to attend Respite as age difference is too great since he turned 18.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

3. The practical measures required to better support carers

As a carer, I need help with ...

more housing (youth housing). We're trying to keep our son home until we no longer be able to care for him. At the same time the financial constraints has made it difficult as we only rely on one full time income More information is attached on a separate sheet for over two decades now. Hard to afford holidays

4. Strategies to assist carers to access opportunities and choices

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

- increasing carer allowance.
- respite options for carers.
- supporting carers better financially and psychologically. It's emotionally very draining when one cares for own son full time for More information is attached on a separate sheet almost two decades and will have to continue to do so. It will certainly cost government more

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. if we decide to place him in a home.

Yours sincerely

Signature 

Chris
Print your name

Chris

Date
7th June, 2008

Postal Address

An Attachment to a

Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth's Inquiry into better Support for Carers.

My wife and I felt that there aren't enough services for young teenagers in the areas of Autism. The constraints we have as a family in everyday life aren't describable by words.

I decided to start my own self employed small business when our son was born in 1989. It turned out that our only son is autistic so my dream of running a small business has vanished!

We get two week nights a week of respite in a month. The latest booking being two nights in May and there will be two more nights of respite for us in July. with no support in June.

In our opinion, there should be a distinctive age group of respite happening. For instance, the previous respite prior to our son turning 18 was a much smaller gap between the ages of those teenagers, ranging from 13 – 18 years old.

Once he turned 18, he at times was put with someone aged 50 or 60. How inappropriate age group is that!! There should be a group of 18 – 25 years old or something like that. Middle age people perhaps should be placed together in a different sorts of housing, not to mingle about with teens.

There should also be more permanent housing available. We're in our early 50s and I have been looking after our son, with limited time available to run my business, and often work till mid night to catch up with times that I spent being available for him. It has been impossible for me to even seek part time employment. Whenever he misbehaves at school or day centre, I have to be on call and be available to pick him up.

We feel there aren't many professionals around who can assist us in times of total distressed circumstances, we were always being left on our own to deal with issues, having to always sort ourselves out.

There were also constant expenses with Speech Therapist sessions, Occupational Therapist sessions, Psychiatrist and psychologist appointments. Who would top such bills?

There should be much, much more allowance for family with a child with disability of any sort, especially if one parent has to stay around and be that immediate carer. That carer needs to be paid minimum wage, provide with health care card or other benefits. Instead, one breadwinner in the family has to feed three mouths, pay mortgage and left with hardly any holidays.

This desperate situation in a well-developed country like Australia, needs to be looked at and reviewed urgently.

Without those carers who are willing to mind their own child at home for as long as they physically and emotionally still able to, it would have cost the government a whole lot more if all those disabled people are sent into homes, and not with family support.

There should also be more workers trained in specific disability fields to better cater for those people's needs. Our council has limited workers who understand autism. Unless we use a worker on a regular basis, as often as weekly (that also cost us), we can't just book one for a meeting or a P.D. we want to attend, as there are no workers available for booking in just a few days. What if you can't afford on going council worker fees?

We feel that as tax payers, we have to do so much more, with so little. The system is not working and needs to be reviewed straight away.

The list goes on.....when and where should we stop?

We do hope that we are heard by the decision making party. It's about time the politician do something for families. We have suffered for far too long, with so very little support.

Awaiting for the outcomes.

Yours sincerely,



Chris