

Submission No. 1217

(Inq into better support for carers)

AOC 18/8/08

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2008

Maria

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

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.

My name is Maria , and I am a middle-aged single parent who is also deemed legally blind. For the past fifteen years, I have been looking after my mother who is currently seventy seven years of age and has undergone two knee replacements, a hip replacement and a shoulder replacement. I also live with my daughter, who is a full time university student who also provides assistance as a carer not only to her grandmother, but to myself as well. My primary source of income is the disability pension, because as a result of my blindness and other health issues, I cannot earn my income. The primary difficulties I face as a carer include not having enough funds to purchase groceries and to pay for the increasing electricity, water rates, house insurance, council rates etc. and I also have many difficulties with transportation – more so taking my mother to supermarkets, doctors/specialist appointments, dentist appointments and so on.

I worry about my future because the cost of living makes life as a carer hard. The allowances provided by the government are not sufficient enough to cover the imperative expenses in our day-to-day lives. Therefore, this means that it's very difficult to ensure my family's socio-economic needs are being met and maintained.

The things that stress me most about being a carer is the lack of accessibility of services. I often find that certain bus and taxi drivers refuse to take us to our desired destinations, whether it be our home or a doctors appointment, because they do not accept the fact that my Blind Citizen's Australia Travel Pass permits the admission of one other passenger besides myself to travel for free. Taxi drivers in particular, often refuse to take us home from our grocery shopping because they don't want to

help us load/unload our groceries. This hinders my ability as a carer because I cannot provide my mother with the services she needs to assist her with her daily activities and her health in general.

I think the government can help better carers by increasing the carers allowance in order to meet the ever-increasing costs of living, as well as to create greater understanding of disabilities and the roles of carers within the wider community to avoid the issues we face with transportation. By doing this, I hope it will provide much assistance and will ease the pressures faced by many carers such as myself.

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 all carers in Australia.

Yours sincerely,

Maria