

Wednesday, 18 June 2008

A.O.C. 27/6/08  
Submission No. 236  
(Inq into better support for carers)

Secretary  
Inquiry Into Better Support for Carers  
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, Housing and Youth's Inquiry into Better Support for Carers.

**Who I am**

I am Joan I [redacted] 56 years old and carer for my son Stewart. Stewart was born in 1989 and since birth has had the condition Isodicentric 15. He is intellectually impaired, autistic and suffers from epilepsy. He requires care 24 hours a day and 7 days a week and I have been doing this for almost 19 years.

### A. My contribution to society as a carer

Consider the following balance sheet:-

	Value of care	Government contribution
Value of Stewart's care if he were totally supported by the tax payer	Estimated \$100,000 per year for 24 hour care, 7 days a week	
Disability pension plus mobility allowance paid by Centrelink		\$10,821.20 per year
Carer's allowance paid to me by Centrelink		\$2,615.60 per year
Post-School Options funding from DSQ		\$12,000 per year
Respite care funding from HACC		\$2,662.40 per year
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$100,000 per year</b>	<b>\$28,099.20 per year</b>
<b>Balance</b>		<b>Minus \$71,900.80</b>

It can readily be seen that the value of my unpaid work is \$71,900.80 per year. This is my contribution to society. I do this because I love my son.

### B. Barriers to Social and Economic Participation

Considering my annual donation of \$71,990.80 to the economic status of the country (see above), I consider that my economic participation is considerable. However, my personal economic status is somewhat depressed owing to the fact that while I am caring for Stewart, I cannot work. I pay \$4,000 per year for care for Stewart while I work and combined with the day respite he receives from the post-school options funding, this allows me to work a small part-time job. I end up with very little money in my hand, but the job keeps me sane.

In order to be able to work, I need care for Stewart. While he was a child, the childcare provisions worked well for us and enabled me to work. However, as he is now an adult, it is extremely difficult to get appropriate care.

**My recommendation is that the childcare provisions be enlarged and extended to cover all carers, not just the carers of young children. This would enable me and other carers to go out to work and earn money.**

My social participation is likewise limited by the need to care for Stew. I've forgotten what a normal social life is, so I can make very little comment. Someone told me once that normal people go out and do things they enjoy. That must be fun.

### **C. Practical Measures to Support Carers**

1. That the childcare provisions be extended to include all carers, not just the carers of young children. This would enable carers to work. The care payments should recognize the extent of the task so that daycarers are willing to do the job.
2. That the real \$ value of carers' work be recognised and they be paid appropriately.
3. That an entitlement to a given amount of respite care be attached to every Carer Payment and Carer Allowance. At the moment, carers' are permitted to have respite care but they need to go begging from the State Government to get it. An entitlement to respite care would be fair and reduce the stress and tension that comes from having to seek respite care.
4. That Superannuation be attached to Carer Payment and Carer Allowance. Carers are often in the caring role for many years and access to superannuation would assist them to plan for the future more effectively.
5. That the Federal government work towards reducing the confusing and complicated system of supports that at present are to be found in the disability sector. Carers do not need extra stress trying to navigate the system.

Thank you for taking my views into consideration as part of the Committee's Inquiry. I look forward to reviewing the recommendations you make in order to improve support for carers.

Yours sincerely

Joan