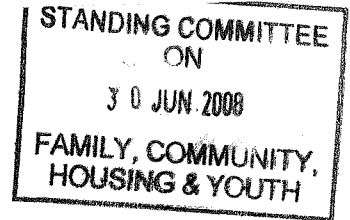


A.O.C. 7/7/08

Submission No. 541

(Inq into better support for carers)

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



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...

I am the primary carer of our 20 yr old
Autistic son who was diagnosed before his 3rd
birthday - devastating news then which changed
our lives forever.

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...

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR ADULT ARTISTIC SON IN OUR FAMILY HOME + THE
COMMUNITY DURING OUR LIFETIME, TAKING CARE OF HIS PERSONAL + DENTAL HYGIENE,
APPEARANCE, NUTRITION NEEDS, BANKING + BILLS + APPOINTMENTS, TRYING TO FIND SUITABLE
DAY PROGRAMS FROM LIMITED OPTIONS TO OCCUPY HIS DAYS + GIVE US SOME RESPIRE,
TRYING TO GIVE HIM QUALITY OF LIFE + PLANNING FOR HIS FUTURE ACCOMMODATION AS
HE WILL BE UNABLE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

2. The barriers to social and economic participation for carers

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

ATTACHED

More information is attached on a separate sheet

3. The practical measures required to better support carers

As a carer, I need help with ...

FLEXIBLE RESPITE W HOME
DAY PROGRAMS IN OUR TOWN

More information is attached on a separate sheet

4. Strategies to assist carers to access opportunities and choices

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

More information is attached on a separate sheet

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.

Yours sincerely

BEV

Print your name

-6-08

2. Barriers to social & economic participation for carers...

We rarely go out and only socialise by invitation and when we do, finding a Carer is most painstaking – Jarrod is not always included on the invitation and if we did take Jarrod along it is usually stressful.

There are not enough paid care workers available in our region and the few we have are overworked and we have no family nearby.

We have no freedom or flexibility in our lives for even simple things like shopping and appointments. Usually when my husband is home for lunch I will do a quick shop or pay bills etc. We live on a farm fortunately close to Kerang.

My husband and I both have health problems, possibly linked to having a child with a disability. We both find it hard to relax and are often rushed and stressed.

I am unable to seek employment as Jarrod needs 24 hour supervision an employer may not be flexible enough if Jarrod has holidays or sick or unco-operative.

Bew

3. As a Carer I need help with...

Respite – There is a shortage of paid care workers in our town and often we have to pay a personal friend to mind our son *IN HOME* when we go out socially with friends our age. Jarrod needs to be with his own age group if he does go out.

A respite house in the town would be great to occasionally have a weekend off also. *Respite houses are full in Swan Hill / Go hrs away.*

I often wish we had a Big Brother “buddy” scheme in our area. Unfortunately also there are not enough males in the business of respite and then to find trustworthy ones i.e. sexually!

As long as Govt continues to grant the Carer Bonus at the end of each financial year I recommend it be a uniform amount to all Carers, not \$1600 for some (due to means testing) and \$600 for others. A Carer is the same no matter what the economic or social class! My Carer Bonus will most likely be used to pay for respite this year.

Day Programs – my son has had to travel to Swan Hill 60ks away since age 6 to Specialist School. He coped well with that. Now he attends Swan Hill TAFE 2 days a week and suggestions are he is not coping with that into his 2nd year. Our other option is Murray Human Services in Swan Hill up to 5 days a week or 1 day in our town of Kerang which he attends from 9.30am – 3.15pm.

Swan Hill is the main centre for services for disabilities as it stands. We have a supported workshop (Murray Industries Kerang) in our town which will not take everybody on as there is not enough work and they have to run like a business and make a profit and possibly they haven't got the staff to take on all the supervision necessary to employ all our kids with disabilities.

Our support group have been trying to get Peter Services to run day programs in Kerang through Outreach and we don't know if and when it will eventuate, but are hopeful. They need to lease a house and train staff apparently.

3 other families with older Disabled Adults have bought a house and have workers in the morning and evening but these adults are able to be unsupervised at night and have day programs. Most residential houses the residents have to vacate between 9 and 3 for day programs, but what if they don't have suitable day programs!!??

Bev

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4. Govt. can better help Carers by...

Extra monetary Allowance for Respite when the Agencies are unable to provide paid care workers.

Also be aware that some Agencies use large chunks of disability funding in administration.

My son gets a Pension but we still dig into our own resources regularly i.e. when grocery shopping etc. and for instance the proposed utilities would not be productive in the case of our son as all utilities are in our name and he lives with us.

Respite houses in small rural towns.

More paid care workers – or encourage training and encourage more males also for the males with disabilities – there are 90% women in the industry. All we ask is that our adult son be looked after as well as at home, not always Day Programs in small rural towns – to travel to Swan Hill ^{my experience} costs.

Bev

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