

THE**FAMILY**

Memo To	:	The Future of Carers.
From	:	Debbie
Date	:	Thursday, 19 June 2008
Subject	:	Parliamentary Inquiry for Carers

Dear Mr Melham,

While I am glad to hear the Federal Government has changed their minds about cancelling the carer's bonus, it did make me think and raised some serious concerns.

Already my husband and I are really struggling trying to manage on the pension. The price of food has increased, the price of petrol has increased, price of everything has increased, but the pension has not had any noticeable increase in rate. More and more we are relying on family and charity services.

That bonus is something that I can use for the big bills that we cannot save up for, for example, a new water heater, replacing the guttering or a new car. At present, we do not own a car as our last car needed too many repairs to get re-registered. We have been given an old car but it needs more repairs before I can get it on the road. We are using my daughter's car as I cannot be without one with both my husband and son. This has highly inconvenienced my daughter but she doesn't say a word.

We now have no private health insurance, no house and contents insurance, no funeral plan or life insurance. We can't afford to have pest control or the carpet cleaned. Our washing machine is broken (but still works thank goodness), we have borrowed our next door neighbours vacuum cleaner – (for two years!!). I don't buy any clothes, I wait till my sisters' clean out their wardrobes and then they give me clothes. Do you know how demeaning that is? The only way we get to see a doctor or have any health checks are if I ring and find out if they take Medicare only. We can't afford to go to the dentist – yes there is free dental for pensioners but the wait is horrendous.

Increasing the pension by a few dollars a week would not help as it's impossible to save. At the moment, we need a new orthopaedic mattress as my husband's back has deteriorated severely. I had earmarked that bonus money to purchase a new bed so he was not in as much pain. He is on numerous strong painkillers and he may need another operation – we are not sure yet as we don't see the specialist for a few more weeks.

My son also needs extra care. He has a learning disability, ADD, an auto-immune deficiency, an endocrine deficiency (growth hormone deficiency), mucocutaneous candidiasis, corneal ulcers, numerous allergies and many other health problems.

The pension needs to be increased by a substantial amount to keep up with the daily cost of living expenses. I was horrified to hear on the news not long ago that low income earners may get a pay increase of \$28.00 a week to make a total of \$528.00/week. Do you realise that the pension is less than that? Less than a low income earner.

I am almost at the end of my tether; all I ever think about is how we will pay the bills and buy food and how to get to the next doctors' appointment and how quick I can be back home in case my husband needs me.

I realise that this letter will probably not help but I feel that someone must say something. I don't want to end up like those poor people who have burnt their houses just so the bank can't get them but life is an endless struggle.

Looking forward to your reply.

Regards

Debbie