

Submission No. 1122

(Inq into better support for carers)

3rd July, 2008

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Secretary
Inquiry into Better Support for Carers
Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing & Youth
P O 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.

I am the carer of my 30 year old daughter and more recently of my husband. My daughter requires constant assistance with her daily activities and seizure control.. My husband, a long term Type 1 diabetic on a Disability Support Pension recently had an accident and now requires a great deal of personal assistance

I have, for many years, been involved in Special Olympics (Regional Treasurer) The organisation runs a year round sporting programme for people with intellectual disabilities. I have also spent many years working with other parents of people with disabilities, educating myself in areas of disability support and learning of systems of support in other countries as well as helping to developing an accommodation support and social housing solution – still in progress.

Recognition of my role as a carer could be made by more available respite – I am not yet

65 but sometimes feel I just cannot cope. A little more Carer's Allowance might allow for some personal luxuries eg a massage, hair colour.

My life is totally governed by my caring role. If I want to do anything outside normal activities, allowances have to be made for my daughter's activities or my husband's needs. My husband and I had our own business until he had to stop working which allowed me to also be available to care for our daughter. However, it would be very difficult for me – now aged 61 – to hold down any employment . As we live in a rural area, I need to transport my daughter anytime she needs to go out.

The thing that would help most and which I am working toward, is to have our daughter live independently in her own place in the town area. However, as there is little funding available for accommodation support, I will still be her primary carer for the time being. In my case, funding for more accommodation support would ease my load substantially. However, I also believe there are not enough respite options available and in my experience, younger carers, people in their forties, fifties an early sixties, often feel overwhelmed by their caring roles and, in some cases, there is no escape ever.

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

Yours sincerely

Coralie