



Submission No. 129  
(Inq into better support for carers)  
A.O.C. 25/6/08

Committee Secretary

Inquiry into Better Support for Carers

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community

Housing and Youth.

P.O. Box 6021,

Parliament House,

CANBERRA ACT 2600

**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: ...**

Our submission is on behalf of those full-time carers who are parents of children/adults with a disability.

My husband and I have been the Carers of our intellectually disabled young adult for the past 27 years. Our child requires 24/7 care, supervision and attention. She has multiple disabilities and significant health problems, some in the past, others still current. We also provided care for an ageing parent for ten years until their death three years ago. We are now aged 69 and 59 and experiencing significant health problems ourselves.

**The role and contribution of Carers in Society.**

**As a Carer, I feel that my role is.....**

Not highly valued by the Australian Government. You pay us the miserly sum of \$100.60 per fortnight (that is, \$50.30 per week) to provide 24/7 care. . This is downright insulting!!!! We don't have time to protest too much about this because we are too busy caring. We are ineligible for any further payments because we don't meet the income and assets test.

A parent-carer should be compensated for their caring role, regardless of income or assets; our caring role is no less than those who receive full Carer benefits. We are self-funding retirees who don't receive any social security payments from the government, we have worked hard to provide for ourselves, yet you discriminate against us in this manner. We receive only \$600 when it comes to distribute the Carer Bonus, where did the \$1000 Bonus go? We are not eligible! Walk a mile in our shoes, your response may be different.

## **The barriers to social and economic participation for carers.**

### **As a Carer, I face the following problems.....**

Insufficient respite services are made available. In our caring role with our child, we have provided care for all but three nights in twenty seven years. There appears to be endless "packages" to support the aged but very little available to support families who are caring for children with disabilities. What happens when you wear out the Carers and they are no longer able to fulfil their caring duties? Give us all a break before that happens!

It is common knowledge that Carers don't have a social life. It is not always possible to take the disabled young adult to entertainment, so one of a couple has to forfeit their social outing to allow the other Carer the opportunity to have some respite. Consequently, Carers rarely have the opportunity to participate in social activities because the caring role denies them that opportunity.

The economic situation is that, even though our disabled person receives a Disability Support Pension, we are the primary carers and ultimately responsible to ensure that all liabilities are met. We have to use our own resources to provide additional resources for our disabled young person, yet still have to manage our finances to ensure our financial security in the future. Please compensate us appropriately for the level of care we provide.

## **The practical measures required to better support carers.**

### **As a Carer, I need help with...**

**Additional financial resources for Carers.** Pay full-time parent- carers appropriately for their caring role. To be paid only \$50.30 per week is pathetic. At least one of a couple is barred from participating in paid employment throughout our life because our caring role demands that we should be elsewhere.

**Additional Respite Services** so parents can have a break from the stress of a caring role. Channel the funding through Carer Support Services and appropriate agencies so the families get maximum benefit. Not in the form of "packages" where 60% is "snatched" in Case Management fees to pay yet another professional and the disabled miss out again!

## **Strategies to assist Carers to access opportunities and choices**

### **I think the Government can better help Carers by.....**

Listening to the Carers and genuinely trying to meet their needs.

Thank you for taking my views into consideration as part of the Committees inquiry. I look forward to reviewing any recommendations you make to improve life for carers in Australia.

Yours sincerely,

Glenis

12<sup>th</sup> June 2008