

Submission No. 646

(Inq into better support for carers)

A.O.C. 8/7/08

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 & Youth's Inquiry into Better Support for Carers.

My role as a Carer is caring for my 35 year old son who has a rare form of Muscular Dystrophy and mild intellectual impairment.

My caring role has affected my life from the day my son was born. I had achieved well at school and had been employed

by the State Public Service as a Clerk at the Court House in Mackay until my marriage. My son was the last of my 4 children, and I found I was unable to return to the work I had enjoyed because of the full-time caring role, including lots of Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy and other special activities which he required. We funded these activities ourselves, as there was a shortage of therapists in Mackay at the time, and only a few students could access the ones provided at the Special School which my son attended. It has been a difficult road for us to travel financially. In the past 19 years I worked approximately 2-3 hours per day cleaning the local Police Station, as this was the only work I could do, and then be home before my husband went to work.

At this stage in my life my main concern is my son's future when my husband & I are no longer here to care for him. He would hate to be moved from the

Area where he has lived all his life. For him to have a low cost housing unit here in Sarine, with perhaps weekly supervision, would be my dream to-day. This would allay any fears my husband & I have about his future.

Financially it has been a disaster for us, when I think of approximately 30 years of lost income for myself, which would have made our retirement much more comfortable. Our friends are caravanning around Australia, while our retirement is so different to theirs.

Most Carers, I feel, would ask for better financial support from the Government. Please do not terminate the Bonus for Carers & Age Pensioners, which is paid at this time each year. I would like to know why it isn't paid to Disability Pensioners as well, is it because many of them do not vote?

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

Heather