



30th July 2007

Dear Sir/Madam,

Inquiry into the cost of living pressures on older Australians.

My husband and I attended the forum on Aged Care at Midvale last week. Further to this forum we would like to submit a small report to the Senate Community Affairs Committee.

During the past few years and in particular since the introduction of the GST charge we have found our budget does not go as far. It is OK for the government to give tax relief but that is of no good to people on a pension who have no extra and pay no tax.

The Government paid my husband a \$500 subsidy to help with costs, but I don't get extra because I am under 65 years of age. I feel these extras should be paid to partners of pensioners, particularly if they have only the basic pension and no other income. I have not worked all of our married life and spent many hours helping in a volunteer capacity within children's groups and the community.

Dental is a big issue for us. We were in the public dental system but found it had long delays. For several years even though we are on pensions we paid private cost for dental but now have had to go back on the waiting lists for public dental treatment. Private dental should we feel be covered partly if not fully by a Medicare type refund. Even a 50/50 basis would help many to stay off the public waiting lists. Even if there was a payment system similar to when we buy new reading glasses.

Until the recent big jump in the cost of petrol we spent many weeks per year helping as volunteers in government reserves and camping areas. We have not been able to continue this due to cost of fuel and general living costs!!

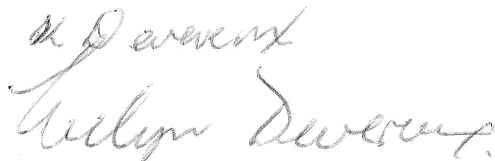
We are also very concerned regarding the care of people not just elderly who need extra care. Hospital is OK when a person needs it but intense therapy is very important like the restorative unit and Swan District Hospital. My father spent only a short time in these areas and was sent to a care awaiting placement for nearly 3 months. Unless other care awaiting is better than where he was sent the money could be used more beneficially in providing more restorative beds. At the care centre Dad was not cared for adequately and the staff level were very poor. In my mother's words she called it a transit holding pen. If this is the type of care you are proposing we would not be in favour of it unless staffing was greatly increased. My father broke his hip the 2nd week he was at the centre and was getting only limited physio because there was only one person supplied and she could not care

for Dad on her own. In our experience we would like to see more restorative beds and perhaps more people would recover enough to go back to their homes and not be needing nursing homes. On return to home families must be able to access more help for their family member needing care. From what I have heard from friends home care is not available without being put on long waiting lists. Private home care is very costly and out of the reach of most on pensions.

There also must be suitable care available for those who have children and family much younger than 65. I have friends who are ageing and concerned where their children will go when they can no longer care for them. It is important for the government to provide care for these adults as at the moment parents are saving the government many many thousands of dollars doing the 24 hours 7 day a week job. for very little recognition. Many of these carers have spent great amounts of money caring and do not have finance to place their children in private accommodation if it was available.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to lodge a submission.

Yours faithfully

Handwritten signatures of Keith and Evelyn Devereux in cursive script.

Keith and Evelyn Devereux

Sent to
The Secretary
Senate Community Affairs Committee
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Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600