

Submission to Jenny Macklin MP
Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services,
and Indigenous Affairs –

Inquiring to Review Better Support for Carers.

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Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth addressing the terms of reference submitted by former Senior Lecturer in Law Monash University, Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Victoria and author of various legal textbooks.

This submission focuses on a number of terms of reference as outlined in Ms Jenny Macklin's MP's Media Release of May 2008. These submissions are as follows:

- The role and contribution of carers in this society and how they should be recognised by the federal government.
- The practical measures required to better support (or assist) carers involving key priorities; and
- Strategies to assist carers access the same range of opportunities as the wider community, especially increasing the capacity for carers to make choices within their caring roles.

Introduction:

People with severe physical and psychiatric disabilities are part of the Australian society. Furthermore, there is a need for special care both for the people who look after them and the carered. The carers take the time, effort and financial out of pocket expenses to support these disabled Australian citizens.

On the other side of the ledger, the federal government has a responsibility to provide financial assistance to the carers. This is because the carers take the physical, economical and financial load off the government. In other words it is a saving on the Federal government's purse.

Hence the Federal government needs to take seriously the role of the carer in Australia.

Pursuant to Part 2.5 of the *Assistance for Carer's Legislation Amendment Act (Cth) 1999* (No 13/1999) a number of reforms measures were introduced to re-structure the provisions for carer's in Australia.

For the purposes of this submission, the most important feature of the changes introduced by the then Minister for Community Services (Mr Warren Truss MP) was the *Adult Disability Assessment Tool*¹ (ADAT). This submission focuses on the role and function of the ADAT in assessing a carer's allowance (the non-means tested allowance).

¹ The Adult Disability Assessment Tool is found in Section 954 (i) C of the Social Security Act (Cth)

The ADAT test for an eligible applicant to receive the allowance is centered and based on a **physical** disability test. The ADAT **does not** take into account **psychiatric, mental or emotional** disabilities or impairments. This anomaly in the legislation should and must be changed. The 30 point scale is strongly biased against the mentally impaired and as it stands is inequitable.

This submission asks the current member for Jaga Jaga (Ms Jenny Macklin MP) to introduce a Bill into Federal Parliament to amend the relevant section or sections of the Social Security Act so that the ADAT encompasses people who suffer from an Intellectual and or Psychiatric disorder which is recognised by the medical profession.



Dated:.....

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