

Committee Secretary
Inquiry into Better Support for Carers
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family,
Community, Housing and Youth
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Submission No. 1210

(Inq into better support for carers)

Rec 4/8/08

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 submitting to the Inquiry because...

As a registered nurse, I worked till age 70 years(now 74yrs) in many different fields of nursing I have been practicing as a naturopath for over 20 years.

My husband of 78years has had 3 serious bowel cancers over many years and that has placed serious financial responsibilities on me .We are now both on the pension.

Our second child died of ovarian cancer at age 45 years, 18 months ago.

Over the 17 months of her very severe illness and operations and chemotherapy, I nursed her often for weeks at a time, in our home. During this time I had a fracture in my foot and my husband had a hip replacement.

At present, our second daughter has early melanoma and a 90% chance of developing cancer from an inherited cancer gene.

I FEEL I HAVE HAD A WIDE RANGE OF EXPERIENCE HAVING DEALT WITH MANY ISSUES ARISING FROM SUCH CARING, (also have 4 grandchildren who I have nursed and cared for at times,too!)

More information is attached on a separate sheet

1. The role and contribution of carers in society

As a carer, I feel that my role is

-A MUCH EXPECTED, UNAPPRECIATED ROLE ,MULTITASKING, NURSE, DRIVER, COOK, HOUSEKEEPER, COUNSELLOR, PROVIDER OF MANY SERVICES: MONEY PROVIDER AND MANAGER , A VERY UNENVIABLE ROLE. POORLY UNDERSTOOD BY OUR CULTURE ,EXCEPT OVER THE 2 WEEK PERIOD OF PATIENT DYING.THEN THE CULTURE'S ATTITUDE CHANGES!

THE CONTRIBUTION IS ENORMOUS!. SAVING THE GOVERNMENT AND PATIENT AND FAMILY HUGE COSTS BOTH IN MONEY AND IN SUFFERING!

TO ADD A +VE NOTE: CARING CAN BE A VERY REWARDING EXPERIENCE!

*More information is attached on a separate sheet*2. **The barriers to social and economic participation for carers**

As a carer, I face the following problems ...

SOCIAL BARRIERS:

CULTURE: Except when someone is dying often the cultural attitude is to offer superficial help, but when it comes to heartfelt support well, it's a matter of their superficial needs taking preference.

Carer's health and energy lack is a huge problem socially, especially when there is months or years of uncertainty. A carer does not always make a goodtime gal!

Carer's financial deficits due to relative's needs impact heavily on money for recreation.

Carer stress: Causes a very real problem. Many people understand the loss of a pet and yet cant understand normal grief with the death of a loved one.

WHILST IT IS OFTEN AGREED THAT THE CARER COULD DIE BEFORE THE RELATIVE

DUE TO THE STRESS. AS WITH NURSES BAD BACKS.THE CARER OR NURSE CAN BE TOLD WHAT DO YOU EXPECT? IT IS ACCEPTED AS PART OF THE CARING!

INDIFFERENCE FROM THOSE EXPERIENCING-THE GOOD LIFE!

More information is attached on a separate sheet

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

As a carer, I need help with ...

EDUCATION: The sessions planned by Carer's Victoria are very necessary, and so important, as are carer counseling sessions.

PLEASE EXPAND THESE AND MAKE THEM READILY AVAILABLE TO CARER'S IN MANY MORE SUBURBS.

I VERY MUCH NEED TRAINING In MANY CARER ISSUES ,HOWEVER, THE COURSES ON OFFER ARE LIMITED AND USUALLY ON ONLY ONE DAY A WEEK, and at few locations.

CARER'S GROUPS: THESE ARE AVAILBLE ,HOWEVER, I FEEL THERE IS A DESPARATE NEED FOR LOCAL GROUPS.

THE LACK OF SOCIAL SUPPORT CAN BE A MAJOR HEALTH PROBLEM.

HAVING RUN MANY GROUPS SUCH AS HEALTH EDUCATION GROUPS: There are literally thousands of people who are caring in so many different areas ,who could benefit from locally run groups. SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUPS. AS A CULTURE WE ARE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH SORROW! WE NEED TO REGARD SOME SORROW AS O.K.

4 Strategies to assist carers to access opportunities and choices

I think the Government can better help carers by ...

A PROGRAMME TO EDUCATE : AT A PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL:

EVIDENTLY,CHILDREN WORLDWIDE WANT TO BE SEEN AS COOL! THIS DOES NOT LINK WITH TREATING PEOPLE WITH DIGNITY.

CARERS PLIGHT AND STRESS MUST BE BROUGHT TO THE PUBLICS' ATTENTION!

ISSUES OF AGE AND CARER'S ABUSE NEED TO BE ADDRESSED.

A PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN TO TELL THE PUBLIC TO CARE!!!AND TEACH THEM WHAT IS NECESSARY AND HOW TO CARE!

FEEDBACK FROM THE GRIEF STRICKEN IS TRULY A GRAVE CONCERN

SHOWING VERY IMMATURE CULTURAL ATTITUDES TO GRIEF.

RECOMMENDATIONS: EXTRA:

-SAVE THE GOVERNMENT MONEY AND PSYCHOLOGISTS COSTLY VISITS!

By utilizing more effectively Carer's Vic. And other states. (Australia) education and training for Carers.

Training retired nurses to give one on one grief support to carers. The NURSE-AT-CALL service in Victoria is an excellent service. Maybe a CARERS- AT- CALL could be good.

CHANNEL 7s INSIGHT PROGRAMME COULD RUN A PROGRAMME ON CARING.

LIASING WITH ORGANISATIONS SUCH AS www.national seniors.com.au

This group has a membership of 250,000+ maybe courses could be offered through this network and the other many community networks.

ADVOCACY GROUPS FOR CARERS. For ELDER & ABUSE OF CARERS.

WITH OBESITY CAUSING HEALTH PROBLEMS MORE CARERS WILL BE NEEDED.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ MY SUBMISSION,
