

Submission No. 471

(Inq into better support for carers)

A.O.C. 2/7/08

16 June, 2008.

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth
PO 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 and Youth's Inquiry into Better Support for Carers.

I feel that my role as carer for my disabled sons has cost me a lot in terms of health, friendships and marriage breakdown. For the last 20 years I have cared for my disabled sons. One went into supported accommodation in September, 2006 and this has helped. My son that I currently care for is 22 years old, non-verbal, toilet-timed and has mobility problems. He is currently on a waiting list for permanent supported accommodation. I also have a normal daughter who did her Higher School Certificate last year, this year she has taken off but will go to university next year.

The only time that I get a break is when my son goes to his day programs from 9 to 3 Monday to Friday. He has respite some weekends. I have severe depression and have had so for a number of years. My concern is that physically I won't be able to care for my son for too much longer as he is quite a lot taller and bigger than I am. My marriage broke down in 2003 because of a lot of the strain, both physically and emotionally.

I need help coping with my caring role and I feel that ongoing Counselling and support would be of great help to me. Over the years I have needed counseling on and off to help me cope with different situations that have arisen.

I think that the Government can better help carers by making it easier for more and consistent respite. The need for supported accommodation and the associated waiting lists is way to long, which in effect means that until a place is found for my 22 year old son that I virtually don't have a life outside his day programs from which I drop off and pick up and any respite which I can organize for some weekends, and some nights for special occasions.

I feel that I haven't been able to do a lot of things with my daughter and this has impacted on our relationship. I would like to enjoy life without the role of being a carer before I am too old due to the fact that I am 50 next year

Thank you for taking my views into consideration as part of the Committee's Inquiry. I look forward to reviewing any recommendations you make to improve life for and acknowledge the value of carers in Australia.