

Submission No. 980
(Inq into better support for carers)

27th June, 2008

Ms. Marilyn

The Secretary,
Inquiry into Better Support for Carers
Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and 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 and Youths Inquiry into Better Support for Carers.

I am a 59 year old single person caring for my physical and intellectually impaired sister. We live on a farm which I work by myself and from which I try to derive an income. I believe I am making a contribution to society by caring for my sister but feel that my efforts are not recognised by the Government and are totally ignored. While carers try to cope with little or no assistance the situation becomes more untenable as time goes on. I think this situation should be acknowledged and considerably more resources put back into the community by way of facilities and funding for services.

My caring role affects my life in every aspect - Financially, Socially, Health issues, Psychologically and Emotionally.

My income is limited as I have between 8.30am and 3.30pm on week days to work the farm as my sister cannot be left alone at any other times. Outside employment is not an option at all for the same reason. The house in which we live is in urgent need of renovations such as bathroom facilities because of my sisters physical deterioration but finances do not allow for these upgrades.

A social life is totally non-existent for myself as I do not have any support to care for my sister even for a few hours per week and as a family the logistics of shopping or outings are too overwhelming. I have not had a "holiday" for many years or a weekend away.

I have had ongoing medical concerns and have been in need of operations for over two years but once again there is no respite or support for my sister while I would be in hospital or recuperating. The operations are deferred and my health continues to deteriorate.

The stress of my situation has impacted considerably on my coping abilities and feel that my time as a carer is limited given the current situation. While I would like to continue providing for my sister in a loving home environment, it is more difficult every day and I would be further distressed if abandonment of my sister was the only option left to me. This option would not only be detrimental to us but would put a lot more financial pressure on the Government.

The practical measures that would help me are -

Overnight and short term respite.

In home support and community access for my sister.

Financial support.

Long term supported accommodation in my region for when I can no longer care for my sister and other alternatives would be available.

At present, none of these services are available in the Lockyer Valley. If this situation could be rectified, I feel that I would be able to earn more income, participate more actively in the community and rectify some of my own health issues which would in turn help me cope better in my role as a carer.

Thank you for taking my views into consideration as part of your Inquiry. I look forward to reviewing the outcome of this Inquiry and hope that your recommendations will improve support for carers.

Yours sincerely,



Marilyn

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