

Submission: Equal Pay for Carers

There is no argument with Statistics showing there will be many more elderly in the years to come and that we are living longer. Statistics also show elderly are entering residential care and accepting community packages at an older age and at a higher care level than ever before.

Older citizens are encouraged to remain in their own home longer and often a family member becomes their carer.

There are so many discussion papers, proposals, surveys done, and arguments put forward for more funding for aged care, whether it be nursing homes or in the community, but I have yet to hear of any proposal, discussion paper or survey for extra funding for the actual **at home carer**.

These carers, as opposed to residential care facilities, receive only the allowance and/or carer payment.

Often the carer has to cut back on their work hours or give up work completely.

The carer and person they are caring for both receive the pension, regardless of how high the care level is.

Residential facilities apply for extra funding based on level of care required

Residential care workers work a maximum of eight hours per day

An at home carer works 24 hours a day

Residential care workers can go home and forget their work at the end of their shift

At home carers are at home

Residential care workers work a maximum of 5 days per week (38 hours)

At home carer's work 7 days per week

Residential care workers use their days off for shopping, domestic duties, appointments and to relax.

At home Carer's have to slot it in when they can.

Residential care workers are entitled to paid holidays and have a union to fight for higher pay and better working conditions.

At home carers are entitled to place their loved one into care for respite, usually with a cost factor and a huge damage control effect when they come home.

This list can go on forever, but my point is that even though there is assistance for the home carer, it is nowhere near enough. Ask any carer and you will be told they have put their life on hold because they do what they do because of the love they have for the person they are looking after. Many families break up with this constant extra pressure on emotional, physical and mental wellbeing.

Obviously as time goes on the work load and pressure increases which results in the carer suffering burn out or breakdown.

Who cares for the carer?

If residential facilities can apply for extra funding to care for our aged, so should those dedicated people (and it is often left up to one family member) who lovingly care for someone at home also be able to have access through the same processes for funding instead of being discriminated against.

Jennifer Probets