

To the inquiry into caring for older Australians.  
Productivity Commission.

### WHY IS MY HUSBAND IN A NURSING HOME???

I cared for my husband at home for 4 ½ years with minimum assistance from the geriatric team. 4 Hours per week. I have been to every section of the care sector with an attitude of pass the buck from every department. I need to travel 35 minutes to and from my nearest town. Take 1 hour and 10 minutes out of my 4 hours for travel, this means I had less than 3 hours per week to myself. My ARIA score is 2.2, therefore I am not isolated. You better try convincing me because I am isolated. Each case must be re-evaluated according to the needs of individual cases instead of pushed into the one basket.

I was able to call a stop to my intolerable position before I had a mental or physical melt down by placing my husband in a nursing home—expensive for you but heart breaking for us. The Government/ The geriatric system and all the departments to assist the carer have totally failed in our case.

There are too many little groups.

e.g. Direct to care.—They were totally ineffective.

Carers Victoria and carers Australia—They are volunteer groups, how were they to fund more help for us? Local and distant members help with moral support but although this is important it does not give you a break.

EACH packages are so rare in our area that there is a 12 months waiting list even if you can get an assessment team to even consider your case. This took me months to even get a consideration for a reassessment.

What is the role of the care Managers and their team? When my situation began to be too much for me, they became defensive and lost. Why are they there?

Who am I?—a carer, a wife, a 69 year old retired nurse with 47 years service. Thus you may have some understanding that the system completely failed us, at our most vulnerable stage in our lives.

Get rid of the areas that are not functioning, and put in a more realistic funding system that works. There are people in our shire receiving council assistance for years after the need has passed. Reassessment of everyone is required at a regular interval.

I am willing to a face to face discussion with a member of the inquiry committee if this will help.

Thelma Herbertson.

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