

February 8<sup>th</sup> 2011

Caring for Older Australians  
Productivity Commission  
GPO Box 1428  
Canberra  
ACT 2601

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Inquiry into Caring for Older Australians

I work as a Personal Carer for a non-profit community aged care provider. For many years I have been going to see residents in their homes offering them various services ranging from Personal Care (showering) to Home Services, (Cleaning of Home), Transport to Medical Appointments, Recreation etc. I was drawn to this industry because the elderly have a lot to offer and are often forgotten and deserve to be looked after in their old age.

The Productivity Commission Inquiry into Aged Care raises a lot of issues but falls short on Personal Carers who do not work in Aged Care Home or Hospitals and are out on the road. I feel the whole industry does not recognise the work we do, the preliminary entry of Certificate III which can be attained whilst working and going to school and on-going training on a monthly basis covering CPR, First Aid, Dementia, Parkinsons Disease, Depression etc. We use our own cars to visit clients which adds wear and tear, extra mileage and huge depreciation on their value.

I feel we are grossly underpaid and have been for as long as I can remember. The only increases we get are the CPI which is annual or bi-annual, and the E.B.U. which happens every 2 to 3 years. When the rise happens it is a mere 50 cents or \$1 per hour increase! Yet unskilled students or adults in the retail industry or food industry earn approximately \$14-\$17 per hour and have no particular skills or ongoing study to do. We are constantly challenged by our clients and have to be one step ahead the whole time, yet we are sometimes looked upon as unskilled workers! This is a huge insult to one's ego but we keep on going.

Over the next 10 to 25 years the Baby Boomers are going to impact on the Aged Care Services available yet where are all the Personal Carers going to be for the extra care needed? How are you going to attract people into the Industry when the Pay offered is so abysmal? For the special work we do in helping those less fortunate than ourselves we should be recognised for this and earning at least \$23-25 per hour minimal. Under the Howard Government we had no chance of getting any changes done, I would like to believe with a change of Government we may be able to move forward.

In closing, I am one of many in the big picture but I would like to think I have made a difference by writing this letter to you.

Name Withheld (9)