

I have very little hope that anything will be done

I have been caring for my mother part/full time for some eight years. She has been in the palliative care stage for some time and has now entered the end of life stage.

She has COPD and dementia.

Apart from one or two hours a week when I have respite care I am the sole carer. I provide all cooking, cleaning and personal care. I deliver all medications. I arrange and coordinate all medical visits. I provide a home. I sleep in the same bedroom as mum. I wake several times a night because mum is confused and needs reassurance. I have had five days holiday since last June. My family cared for mum while I was away.

I am extremely grateful for the help and support offered to us by the palliative care nurses, the DVA nurses and the OT. In fact, without them, I would be unable to keep mum at home. With their advice, I now have the medications I need to control mum's extreme SOB and the equipment to enable me to physically provide the care mum needs.

I would suggest there be a review of the asset test for Carer's Payment. According to the Productivity Commission " in 2008-09, Australian, state and territory government expenditure on aged care was \$10.1 billion, with two thirds of that expenditure directed to residential aged care." and "most care and support is provided by partners, family, friends and neighbours - of those older Australians receiving assistance in the community, about 80 per cent receive assistance from informal carers."

I am unable to receive Carer Payment because mum is a DVA member and has assets over \$598,000. I am fully aware that we all need to pay our own way but surely the care I provide is worth \$350 a week. The cost to the government were I not caring for mum would be a good deal more.

Ironically, the government would happily pay to have someone come in and clean the house, do the ironing, personal care, etc, at some \$25 an hour, the very service I provide daily but which, because I am a family member, the government will not pay me.

I have no income, no contributions to superannuation and as a woman in her 50's, little chance of ever being employed again.

I have no expectation that anything will change because I am writing this letter.

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Anne Waters