

The battle for the hearts and minds of unpaid family carers of the disabled

We would like to bring to your attention, the CSTDA campaign of the National Carers Coalition and also the Gippsland Carers Association. Both groups made significant contributions to the Senate CSTDA Inquiry and endorse wholeheartedly the Recommendations the Report contains.

We represent unpaid caring families who by their selfless giving provide over 93% of the cared accommodation for people with disabilities aged less than 65 years, but we have no voice because we do not have a funded caring family advocacy network.

We are alarmed at the progress of negotiations for a fourth CSTDA and the bun fight that has become part and parcel of it.

As unpaid caring families we can look forward to another five years of pain and suffering unless we take a stand now on achieving a FAIR GO for disability funded services.

We are advocating that the only way we will achieve a FAIR GO is that the Commonwealth and the States and Territories agree to the introduction of population based benchmark funding of disability services. This would put an end forever to the five yearly battle that sees unmet needs continue to explode against a background of ever increasing funding for everything else.

As long as we (the families carrying the burden) sit back and take age discrimination on the chin, we will continue to die of old age and stress related illness's because governments know they have us in an emotional vice and they continue to turn the screws.

I am Mother and primary carer for my deaf-blind 38 year old Daughter "Moya." She is profoundly disabled due to the Rubella Virus , is totally dependent for all her daily living needs, incontinent at night and defenceless . She has no voice unless I give it to her. I do not know if she would choose to live somewhere else because there is nowhere else. I know that I have the right to expect her to live in her own home so that I can have an empty nest like all other families who have non-disabled sons and daughters.

I know that if Moya was my elderly Mother there would be a place for

her in aged care within a few weeks or months of asking and assessment. I know that aged care gets almost \$9billion a year for benchmark funded accommodation and support services and the aged only have 13% of the population of Australia.

I know that there are over 55,000 Australian people with a dependent disability who are aged over 33 years and are still living with a parent who provided care to them.

I know that the collective funding of the CSTDA comes to a miserable \$3.9billion a year and I know that equitable benchmark funding says that figure ought to be \$10.9billion a year. So, I ask the coalition what are you doing to help people like my daughter Moya and myself to get a FAIR GO?

I hear lip service being paid to asking for what is really needed, but no plan to obtain justice and a FAIR GO!

I know that there are 869,000 people aged less than 65 years who have a disability and 169,000 of those have a severe or profound disability. I know that there are 131,000 people aged over 65 years who have a disability and of those 149,400 have a severe or profound disability.

The vast difference in funding of support services between aged care and disability care is a chasm that must be crossed if caring families are to survive.

We are calling for a National Leaders Summit between the Prime Minister and the Premiers and Chief Ministers to ensure an end the "blame Game" and a FAIR GO for all Australians with a dependent disability. Will you join us????? United we can change the face of caring for the disabled forever.