Author name: K. Raison

Date of submission: Tuesday, 28 May 2024

Im a carer of more than twenty years. My wife and I have cared for more than 50 children and young people in OOHC. I am also an advocate for carers and been so for the last two decades. This service has given me a deep insight into the system with many and varied lived experiences into how Out of Home Care works in NSW, or not as the case maybe! Carers are undoubtedly feeling the pinch during the current cost of living crisis. Carers have always been out of pocket when it comes to looking after other peoples children. My wife and I have spent many more tens of thousands of dollars of our own money over the years than we have ever received in allowances. Increasing the allowances paid to carers would certainly ease an exacerbating factor in explaining the current decline in the number of carers but paying them more money is not the answer. There are many other more important factors to be addressed first - carer support, respect, dignity and valuing and rebuilding the Reportable Conduct process. All these factors have greater impact on carers than does the level of the carer allowance. The non-government providers are wasteful with the financial resource they are provided with to case manage. They clearly illustrate to me, time and time again, they cant financially manage what they currently receive and place increased pressure on carers to pay for care needs that are clearly not the responsibility of carers eg. glasses for the children, payment of private school fees when the agency has enrolled the child/children. The carer allowance is being eroded by agency financial incompetence. Recently uncovered are the carer support packages paid to agencies that carers know nothing or very little about - packages designed to meet the needs of carers in their support of the children in their care - and they dont know anything about them! All payments should be adjusted to CPI movements as at 1 July each year and carers shouldnt have to wait 6 months for catch up