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Your submission for this review:

We have long term care of 3 siblings. They have been in our care 8 years. We had care of the older brother of this sibling group for 6 years. Our carer allowance has not changed in that time, despite huge increases in the costs of caring for a child. The obvious increases include electricity, gas, fuel in cars, food, extra curricular activities, holidays. However the hidden costs are never mentioned: costs of larger vehicle - we had to buy a Hiace bus (we expected to need a bigger car when we started fostering about 10 years ago so we bought an 8 seater - however when asked to care for a sibling group of 4 plus our 3 biological children this was no longer adequate). We had to take out a new loan and pay interest on this loan, with no help from our agency. We asked them to help with interest payments and they refused. Bigger appliances needed when caring for sibling groups. We had 7 children in the house for 6 years . We needed a new fridge, freezer, washing machine. We recieved no financial support. More beds, bedding, car seats, prams etc needed when caring for sibling groups. Our agency agreed to pay for half of a bunk bed. Increased holiday costs when caring for sibling groups. We could no longer stay with family. The number of children meant we had to rent houses or two cabins at a caravan park with huge costs. No help. Lost income. I had to stop working as the needs of so many children meant I couldn't manage my previous workload in my small business as a speech Pathologist. Lost superannuation. Lost income due to sick days for children, pupil free days, time off work to tale children to appointments. Space does not allow for everything to be included. I hope this gives some indication of the grossly inadequate carer allowance. The expectations of carers are those of employees- review's, supervision, training, all mandatory but no protection as an employee. We are volunteers who are abused by the system that should be protecting us so we can protect kids