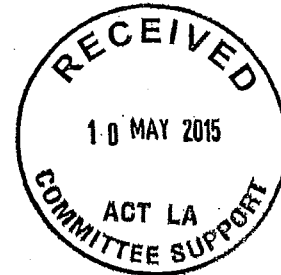


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Mr Brendan Smyth MLA
Chair
Standing Committee on Public Accounts
GPO Box 1020
Canberra ACT 2601



Dear Sir,

INQUIRY INTO ELEMENTS IMPACTING ON THE FUTURE OF THE ACT CLUBS SECTOR

I would like to let your committee know of the tremendous assistance the Cerebral Palsy Alliance organisation in Canberra has provided to my son and our family. The support to families like ours provided by the Cerebral Palsy Alliance would not be possible without the invaluable financial support they in turn receive from ClubsACT.

My son Connor is 20 years of age. After being born very premature, Connor was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. He has spastic quadraplegia and profound intellectual disabilities - he cannot walk, talk and has no communication skills. When he was diagnosed with cerebral palsy our only option to receive specialised advice, support and therapy was to travel to Sydney to attend the Cerebral Palsy Alliance centre at Allambie Heights.

However, the need to travel to Sydney ended when the ACT Cerebral Palsy Alliance moved from just being a fund raising entity to a full service provider around 15 years ago with the funding support of ClubsACT. Without the support of ClubsACT as the major partner, the invaluable services provided to families like ours in the Canberra region would not be possible. If it was not for their financial support families would still be travelling to Sydney to access services, just as we did when Connor was younger.

Being able to access services in your local area means children don't miss school, parents don't need to take days off work and families are able to maintain a good work/life balance. Travelling to attend medical appointments doesn't just impact on the child with a disability - they also impact on siblings, meaning they miss school and their out of school activities.

Since services have been provided in Canberra we have been able to access the services of an orthotist who travels from Sydney to Canberra once a month to conduct a clinic for local children. In recent weeks Connor has received a new wheelchair. The occupational therapists from the Canberra Cerebral Palsy Alliance have helped us right through this process, from sourcing the most appropriate wheelchair for his and our needs, to ensuring the chair was properly fitted on delivery.

In addition to financial assistance, ClubsACT support events held by the Cerebral Palsy Alliance in kind by providing venues for fundraising and community awareness functions.

ClubsACT has continually demonstrated its commitment to assisting families and organisations like Cerebral Palsy Alliance.

Yours faithfully,

Karen McClure