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Your submission for this review:

I would like to make the following points to submit. 1. The out of home care costs far outweigh the amount of allowance paid by DCJ. 2. DCJ have not passed on the allowance increase from 1 July 2024 and have not responded to an email sent requesting information as to why the increase hasn't been made, when it would be made or if it will be back paid. 3. DCJ have not responded to my enquiry about reassessment of a child who was diagnosed with foetal alcohol syndrome disorder, autism level 1, and ADHD in 2022 and receiving NDIS since November 2022. 4. Once guardianship is granted DCJ make it very difficult to discuss changes in circumstances as there is no caseworker. 5. We are told the allowance is not taxable. No information is given as to if it is reportable to Centrelink. If it is then other payments, such as parenting payment and family tax benefit, will be impacted. 6. If carers were paid as a worker with full benefits such as superannuation and holiday loading the carers would be able to retire with a reasonable superannuation. As it is we usually don't work or work part time which impacts the superannuation to retire with. The government should be paying for our future, not just the time we have children in our care, as all other employers are required. 7. My own journey was that I was earning \$72k when I first became a carer and rose to \$83k the year after becoming a carer. At this time I started decreasing my work to accommodate being a better carer. By the time my second grandchild came into my care I was working part time and earning around \$53k. I took a year of leave without pay to see if I could live on the parenting payment and the DCP allowance. For the following two years we survived on a decreasing income until I received \$22k on 2022. We were trapped in a rental that was literally falling down around us, the carport collapsed on my car! Rentals in the area were 2-3 hundred dollars more than I was paying. There was no way I could afford to move without generating income. I returned to the workforce as this was simply unsustainable. I have been very fortunate to obtain work that is within school hours and is family friendly which is versatile to accommodate the families needs. I am able to schedule my time for appointments and other meetings regarding the children. 8. DCJ needs to be very clear and transparent about what funds are available. As a new carer I was not offered anything and received nothing except the DCJ allowance. For the second child I was asked what did I want. I didn't know what I could ask for and was not prompted. I needed a bed and received a bed and mattress from Freedom Furniture valued at less than \$250. They lasted less than a year before I replaced them with better quality products. I have recently been told that \$2000 per child is allocated for setting up. That should simply be given to the carer as a lump sum to purchase products as needed. We don't know what we need until we need it. 9. There needs to be better communication between states when placing kids into kinship care and getting the finances sorted right from the start. I had to fight to receive the allowance. Refused twice, the third time I went to the Minister and was then granted the allowance. I was back paid for some of the time, however I had two years which I didn't receive the allowance. It would have helped me to decrease my hours and not have the child in day care to the extent he was. 10. DCJ need to pay for training. I asked at both placements for any courses and was told they would be provided. I think they may have paid for one course when I found a suitable trauma course in the area. All other online parenting courses and training I have undertaken has been at my own expense. 11. These kids in care, regardless of disabilities or not, all carry trauma yet this doesn't seem to come into consideration. They all need psychiatric care. We are told to see the GP for a care plan first before asking DCJ. Their trauma impacts the household. I am and I have a hyper vigilant child unable to sleep. Night after night of this and work for me and school for him will be horrendous. I can't just take days off because I'm exhausted, my work pays the rent! Items, such as a trampoline, should be funded for these children. The physical activities in a tramp is the best for trauma kids - we are on our second. 12. I just want to provide these children a stable, loving home where they know they are wanted, loved and are safe. I can't do that without working and without the DCJ allowance.