A few weeks ago, I spoke to a gentleman in the Productivity Commission who suggested that when I return home, I email to the Commission with some thoughts and suggestions.

My husband passed away 18 months ago after a short period in a nursing home. When filling in countless forms re assessment three major factors seemed very wrong.

Firstly, if the spouse not entering care needs to fund the person entering care for an accommodation bond, this often necessitates the need to cash in an Allocated Pension or a Super fund. When the person in care dies, that fund cannot be repaid, unless the other person goes back to work.

Most people in this position are aged themselves and cannot return to the work force. A sensible thing to do would be to allow the Pension or Super fund to be repaid as much as possible after the bond or part thereof has been repaid.

Secondly, if a couple owns just one motor car between them, as is the case for many retired couples, then half of that vehicle is taken into account for the asset assessment. This is a ridiculous situation as a car cannot be sliced in half and sold for cash.

Thirdly, half the total income is counted for the income assessment for the person in care. However, if the other spouse is still in the family home, it requires more than half to live. This is because of the constants - insurance, rates, power, water, telephone, car registration, garden maintenance, cleaning costs etc. These are not halved when one person is stays in the home, rather it only cuts about a third from the costs.

Please consider these factors when looking into aged care. I understand that, with an ageing population, we need to fund aged care, but we also need to be fair about it.

Yours truly

Margaret Puttman

29 June 2010