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Representing the people of Bunbury

We have people in our community who regularly perform acts of heroism.

Some work on the front line of our emergency services while others are civilians who do not hesitate to save a life when the situation arises.

These both fit into the dictionary definition of the term, however in this column, I would like to highlight another type of hero.

One who goes about their work behind closed doors without the likelihood of a medal bestowed on them.

These heroes, of which there are many, sacrifice their livelihoods each and every day for those they love.

And unlike the heroes detailed in story books – becoming this type of hero is not a childhood dream.

I am speaking about the partners, parents, grandparents, siblings and friends who care for loved ones who are ill or have a disability.

Last week was Huntington's Disease Awareness Week and in Centrepont Shopping Centre a group of these heroes gathered to inform the community of the disease and promote the need for an accommodation and respite facility for sufferers.

The men and women of all ages were carers of loved ones who currently have the degenerative disease or have since passed away.

Each and every one has a devastating story to tell which exposes the critical deficiencies in our disability funding processes at both a State and Federal government level.

The need for a high-care accommodation and respite facility in the region for people aged 18 to 55 is obvious yet the incomprehensible funding systems have made this an unachievable goal thus far.

Yet somehow those who love and care for them – these silent heroes who I speak of – continue to survive and overcome the obstacles in their way.

Some struggle to care for their loved one at home or face the anguish of placing them in a Perth facility which can cater to their unique needs but isolate them from family and friends.

In other cases, there is no choice but to place their loved one in an aged nursing home despite the fact that some are just 18 years of age.

In 2005, there were 6500 young people living in aged care nursing homes throughout Australia and by the end of last year, it was rising to 10,000.

It's time to stem this tide and ensure this serious deficiency does not continue to burden South West families.

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