

Submission
No 110

**INQUIRY INTO SERVICES PROVIDED OR FUNDED BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF AGEING, DISABILITY AND
HOME CARE**

Name: Name suppressed
Date received: 17/09/2010

Partially Confidential

The most CRITICAL AND PRESSING problem amongst the Services funded by ADHC is the EXTREME SHORTAGE OF SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION and the absence of any planning around it.

Everything else will pale into insignificance if families simultaneously decide that they can no longer care for their disabled family member, having hung on by their fingertips for years, and decide to abandon their person with a disability all at the same time. It would be a complete catastrophe for families and services, and ADHC would be swamped.

Crucial to finding a solution for this are;

+ the need for and the rights of families to be able to plan towards a transition to outside supported accommodation for their loved ones. IF families knew they could plan for the future, then ironically many would actually care for their family member for longer, as they know there is an acceptable future solution. This would also simultaneously relieve stress and pressure from the family carers and significantly improve their quality of life and mental health. This would reduce costs to govt for services to the carers in addition to helping families enormously. A WIN-WIN. Currently accommodation is only provided in crisis situations, by which time families may be unable to help (they may be dead or very sick) and everything spirals out of control for all involved. More funding is essential (from either govts or families, where possible) to be able to provide accommodation in a timely, planned manner.

+ INDIVIDUALISED FUNDING PACKAGES. It is essential that families (in most cases) are involved in deciding on how their loved one will be best accommodated and are involved in the transition and on-going support. They are the people who best know and understand the person with a disability and should help choose appropriate service providers or change providers if the service quality is not good enough. This will act to improve the overall quality of the whole industry. In the event of a planned, timely transition, family would also be able to play a role in the on-going care at least initially, thereby reducing costs to govt.

+ SHARED EQUITY. Govt and ADHC NEED to agree on the approach to shared equity, particularly if the 2 points above are put into place. If families can plan a transition and know that they can direct or control the type of accommodation that their loved one will move into then families are much more likely to contribute towards the total package, either by supplying accommodation or some on-going care costs etc.

Government at all levels and ADHC need to urgently start budgeting for and funding the supported accommodation crisis, before the tsunami of families all relinquish care simultaneously, which would be beyond a crisis. Forward planning, individualised packages and shared equity would all help reduce the overall costs to govt and would provide enormous psychological benefits to families.

Action is needed NOW.

Under the UN Convention of Rights for people with Disabilities, "family members have the legal right to services and resources to be able to cope". We hope that we live in a country that chooses to do the right thing for its most vulnerable members, not because it is legally obliged to.