

**INQUIRY INTO THE EXERCISE OF THE FUNCTIONS OF
THE LIFETIME CARE AND SUPPORT AUTHORITY AND
LIFETIME CARE AND SUPPORT ADVISORY COUNCIL -
THIRD REVIEW**

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blindness and low vision services

30 April 2010

The Hon Christine Robertson MLC
Chair, Standing Committee on Law and Justice
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Robertson

Vision Australia appreciates this opportunity to respond to the NSW Standing Committee on Law and Justice Reviews of the Motor Accidents Authority (MAA) and the Lifetime Care and Support Authority (LTCSA) and their functions.

Vision Australia is the nation's premier provider of blindness and low vision services through comprehensive programs and activities including early childhood, orientation and mobility, employment, information, recreation and independent living services, advocacy services and Seeing Eye Dog services. We also work collaboratively with Government, business and community groups, to help raise awareness, promote public education and to eliminate social and economic barriers for people who are blind or vision impaired.

In NSW, we deliver services and support to more than 9,400 clients through our offices in Albury, Caringbah, Coffs Harbour, Enfield, Gosford, Lismore, Newcastle, Orange, Tamworth, Wagga Wagga and Wollongong. Additionally we provide low vision clinics, regional outreach and referrals from Sydney Eye Hospital, Armidale, Campbelltown, Dee Why, Kensington, Pennant Hills, Penrith, Bathurst, Bega, Bourke, Bowral, Broken Hill, Cobar, Dubbo, Forster-Tuncurry, Grafton, Griffith, Moruya, Mudgee, Newcastle, Nowra, Port Macquarie, Taree and Tweed Heads.

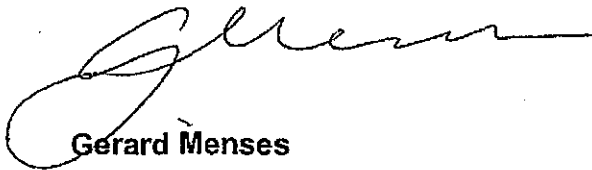
To aid the Committee's deliberations, Vision Australia has chosen to respond by referring to the Annual Reports of the MAA and the LTCSA under separate headings within this submission in the following pages. I have also included a recent media report concerning an accident which resulted in the death of a Vision Australia client in Bowral in March this year.

I would be pleased to provide further information or evidence, or to respond to any queries from Committee Members or support staff as required. In the first instance please contact Ms Linda Hornsey, Vision Australia Manager of Government Relations, on Linda.Hornsey@visionaustralia.org by email.

On behalf of the Vision Australia Board and the Executive, our employees, volunteers, partners and clients and their families I would like to acknowledge and thank the Committee for its previous and ongoing important work to improve and develop the functions of the MAA and the LTCSA.

I look forward to your response and wish the committee the best in its deliberations on these important matters.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerard Menses', written in a cursive style.

Gerard Menses
Chief Executive Officer

Review of the Lifetime Care and Support Authority and the LFTCSAC

Vision Australia makes the following submission on behalf of blind and vision impaired clients and their families:

Focus on Community Support and Services

Vision Australia notes that with the number of participants at 249, there are now more clients living in the community than in hospital or rehabilitation – therefore programs that deliver community support and services are a strong focus. Vision Australia is well positioned to provide expert advice and assistance as well as deliver programs which increase orientation and mobility that enable people to live independently as they choose for people injured as a result of a motor vehicle accident.

Guidelines for vocational and education support; Draft guidelines for consultation on support for recreation and leisure activities; Accommodation and supported accommodation, funding for infrastructure

Vision Australia submits that training be recognised in the development of an individual's community participation plan. This training could include independent living service training such as mobility training as well as training in the use of aids and devices (such as synthetic speech and adaptive technology) to assist in independent daily living.

Key stakeholder

Vision Australia submits that it is a key stakeholder for the purposes of reporting by the Lifetime Care and Support Authority and accordingly should be referenced in the Annual Report.

Projects and research grants

Vision Australia notes it is uniquely placed to provide expert advice and assistance to assist in the delivery of lifetime care and support from a policy and service delivery perspective to people who are blind or vision impaired as a result of a motor vehicle accident. We are aware of pedestrian safety issues for people who are blind and have low vision and would value an opportunity to undertake specific research to address some of the access and safety issues for this community.

General comments

Vision Australia strongly recommends the Lifetime Care and Support Scheme adopt the Classification of vision impairment under the World Health Organisation's International Statistical Classification of Disease and Related Health Problems – 10th Revision. This will ensure a person who acquires vision loss that does not qualify as being legally blind, (under the current definition, clause 2.5) but still has significant vision loss with major emotional and physical ramifications on the individual's life, eligible for the scheme.

When a person is confronted with sudden blindness they require support and care with their daily living in order to maintain independence and dignity. This includes ongoing medical costs, mobility and equipment training, and counselling in assisting the individual and their family in

dealing with the emotional, social, vocational and/or educational ramifications of vision loss.

Vision Australia appreciates the interest and needs of people who acquire blindness or severe vision loss as a consequence to a motor vehicle accident, being included in the eligibility criteria and scheme.

Vision Australia believes that a definition of what is "reasonable and necessary medical treatment, care and support" should be provided within the LTCS Scheme. We would like to see that the abovementioned needs and support are included in what is defined as reasonable and necessary. We would also like to ensure that the life care co-ordinator assigned to work with the individual and their family is aware of blindness organisations and the specialised services that could be of benefit. They should also be aware of specific blindness related needs.

smh.com.au - <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/blind-man-struck-by-truck-dies-20100310-pw90.html>

Blind man struck by truck dies

March 10, 2010 AAP

A blind man has died after being struck by a truck while trying to cross a road in southern NSW.

Police say it's believed the man walked onto Station Street in Bowral as the truck was stopped at a red light.

Initial investigations suggest he walked in between the truck's tipper and dog trailer when the driver, unaware of the pedestrian, took off, police say.

The 56-year-old local man died at the scene.

The driver, 49, was stopped by witnesses and later underwent mandatory blood and urine tests.

He was interviewed by police and released.

Inquiries are continuing.