

**Submission
No 11**

INQUIRY INTO POST SCHOOL DISABILITY PROGRAMS

Organisation:

Name: Mr & Mrs Jim & Maree Murphy

Telephone:

Date Received: 1/03/2005

Subject:

Summary

- 1 MAR 2005

RECEIVED

Director
General Purpose Standing Committee No 2
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

Mr & Mrs J Murphy

28 February 2005

Inquiry Into Changes To Post School Programs For Young Adults With A Disability

We are parents and full time carers of our 24 year old adult son who has both physical and interlectual disabilities. Our son Daniel has attended Flintwood Disability Services Inc since leaving school. He has been with the ATLAS Program for the past 4 years. He attends there 5 days a week. The quality program he receives at Flintwood is a very important part of his life. Without the stimulation and social intergration he receives for his programs, Daniel will become depressed and his health will suffer.

With the introduction of The Community Participation Program, we were told the reforms announced were supposed to provide for improvements. Mr Brendan O'Reilly told us in his correspondence on behalf of the Hon. Carmel Tebbutt, that 'the new programs will be block funded and will increase the flexibility of service providers in program planning and implemetation. This will ensure service user choice and flexibility is maintained.' We have not found this to be so. Daniel will receive \$13,500 therefore reducing his funding by \$6,474 per year.

Daniel's program is highly beneficial to his social and interlectual being. The quality of this program is the main reason we chose this service. Now, because of the changes to ATLAS and the commencement of Community Participation Program, Daniel's hours have been reduced to 2.5 days per week. To keep the standard of care and the quality of program he is currently receiving, the provider has had to reduce the hours. We do not see this as an improvement but as a funding cut. We do not think that the block funding will provide the portability and flexibility needed to provide individualised programs.

On 28 January 2005 we received a letter from Carol Mills (DO/224 M05/1008) Acting Director-General on behalf of The Hon. Carmel Tebbutt. She suggsted we choose a service that best meets Daniel's needs. She also suggested we contact Tessa Wells, ATLAS Coordinator, Metro West Region. She was unable to help us with regard to finding a provider that was offering a 5 day per week service.

Daniel is fully dependant on others. If he is able to qualify for part of the "very high support needs" we need to know. So far no one has been able to tell us how to apply for this extra funding. The department has not been very forthcoming with information. How is DADCH able to assess individuals without having met them? Also, if we do not agree with the departments assessment, how are we supposed to access the appeals process? Information on 'how to access the appeals process' was not available. With only a matter of weeks before the new program starts, shouldn't all this information have been inplace before these programs begin? We are left wondering what is going to happen and unfortunately we have had to make some very hard decisions. We don't believe we are the only parents being put in this position.

We have enclosed a copy of our letter sent to Hon. John J Della Bosca. We feel we have been forced into making this life changing decision regarding our son Daniels care. It has not been an easy decision to make. We have two other young adults at home and we aslo both have careers.

What we were hoping the changes would introduce sustainable programs with the quality of care is not compromised. We would like opportunities for Daniel to stay at Flintwood Disability Service Inc on his current 5 day a week program. We would also like to have access to more regular respite care. With the changes that are taking place this does not seem possible as many parents like us are going to have to make these life changing decisions regarding the care of their loved one.

We would be happy to appear before the inquiry if need.

Yours sincerely,

Jim and Maree Murphy




