

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

Name: Mrs Vicki Happ

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Partially Confidential

Vicki Happ

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Standing Committee on Social Issues

Inquiry into services provided or funded by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care.

Parliament of New South Wales, Australia.

Experiences of family who has a child with disabilities in Far Western New South Wales.

Dear Committee

Our family has been a client of Aging Disability and Home Care (ADHC) for approximately 8 years. My son was born in 2001, with Down Syndrome. We live in North Western New South Wales, a two hour drive from Dubbo the largest city in the area.

Our experience with ADHC has had its ups and downs.

ADHC Case Workers/Managers have large areas to cover often with little or no experience in dealing with the diversity and complexity of families and the problems they face therefore there is a significant staff turnover. Our family has had 5 case workers in my sons first 7 years of life, some of that time the position was vacant, and some of the workers only lasted months. It wasn't until I rang the ADHC intake office complaining of lack of service that I was told I could change Case Workers if I wasn't happy. Our current Case Worker I asked for by name because she was so highly recommended by other families in the area.

There has been reoccurring problems with ADHC availability of Therapists. I have found ADHC services overall to be inconsistent, with some inexperienced therapists, who leave to get married (our last Occupational Therapist, we have not seen an OT from ADHC since), have babies (our previous Speech therapist who twice went out on maternity leave, both times the position was not filled in her absence) or just leave because of the enormous workload and large area they service. Waiting lists are long. Priorities are not transparent. Paperwork is intrusive and repetitive. Currently we have been on the waiting list for over two years for Occupational Therapy and recently my son finally got back on the case load for Speech Therapy after two years on the waiting list. I have chosen to seek therapy through Royal Far West Children's Health (RFW) because I cannot trust ADHC to provide service. I travel to Sydney to access RFW every 6 months to bi-annually. It provides a one stop shop

that ADHC does not. I still access ADHC but only for local help in the school when it is available and most importantly for our current Case Worker , who has a background in disability services, has many years of experience and is invaluable as an advocate and provider of information and support.

Yours faithfully

Vicki Happ