

INQUIRY INTO POST SCHOOL DISABILITY PROGRAMS

Organisation: The Crowle Foundation Limited

Name: Mr David Hancock

Position: CEO

Telephone: 02 9809 3644

Date Received: 04/03/2005

Subject:

Summary

- 4 MAR 2005

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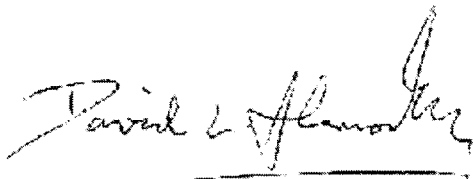
3 March 2005

General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2
NSW Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Please find attached a submission from The Crowle Foundation on Post School Disability Programs.

We look forward to hearing details of the public hearing of this inquiry which we wish to attend.

Yours faithfully
The Crowle Foundation Limited



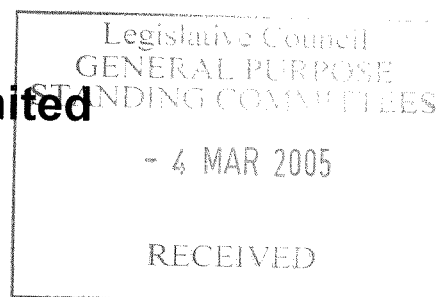
David L Hancock
CEO

Input to the General Purpose Standing Committee

Parliamentary Inquiry – Post School Disability Programs

The Crowle Foundation Limited

3 March 2005



Background

The Crowle Foundation based in Ryde has been actively involved in the lives of people with an intellectual disability for over fifty years. The foundation provides a range of accommodation models for over eighty people, work place training and day activity facilities for over sixty people and work place employment for over one hundred people.

The foundation has been actively involved in post school programmes, ATLAS and work programmes. The foundation is particularly proud of its high success rate in placing individuals in productive work with a placement success rate of over forty percent.

The foundation provides these services at a financial loss each year and then privately raises the deficit each year from an active programme of fund raising.

The foundation is committed to a high level of professional care and excellence in the services it offers to clients and families. This is done in the face of declining government funding for this group of people with intellectual disabilities.

The foundation manages its financial affairs within a strategic plan which covers three years and an operating plan which covers the financial year.

Issues and Concerns

1. Lack of consultation and inappropriate speed of changes:

The sudden and unconsulted announcement by the Minister and its rapid implementation placed the foundation in a very difficult operating situation with a possible negative financial impact of \$200k. Considerable work was suddenly needed to appeal, discuss and lobby against this sudden announcement. Considerable management, family and carers time had to be diverted to manage these crises.

2. Funding cuts masked as reform:

The announcement was purported to be a reform, communication to parents made no reference to the huge financial step back in grant support that was concealed in this reform. This at best was obfuscation at worst it was dishonesty and concealment.

3. True effect of reform is cut in funding of individuals with real needs:

At the end of the day it must not be forgotten that significant numbers of individuals will have had their grant cuts to levels that will cause real difficulties and hardships to them and to their families. Some grants have been cut from \$19,583 to \$13,500.

4. Funding cuts will reduce quality of service and client outcomes:

These cuts will result in a decline in the level and quality of support and training offered to clients. A full five day per week service that will produce successful outcomes cannot be operated for less than \$350 per week or \$16,800 per year.

5. Fixed price tendering not an appropriate approach:

It is of huge concern to the suppliers of high quality services that funding has been allocated via a purported tender to service providers that will allow some service providers to deliberately operate a low cost, lower quality service. This outcome is being supported by the economic tender approach with pre fixed pricing and programme participation decisions being made on inappropriate criteria.

6. Excess power being placed in one department:

It is of great concern to the foundation that we have been warned not to rock the boat on this issue. With the allocation of funds lacking transparency and the whole process including placement being controlled by one government department this has placed complete power in one place, a situation open to less than optimum outcomes.

7. Eligibility assessment of suppliers took insufficient account of years of experience and quality of outcomes:

Despite our years of successful experience in the provision of post school training the foundation was judged unsuccessful in the initial tender. We appealed, after much further work and were then judged successful. This was a very strange and time consuming process.

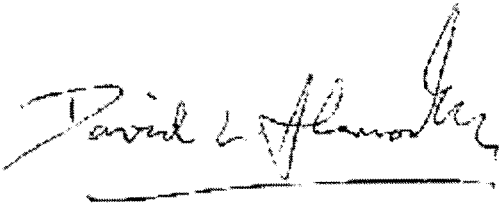
8. High levels of distress caused:

The level of distress this process has caused parents, clients and staff is considerable. The level of uncertainty even now is adding real life impacting burdens to already fraught personal circumstances. At the foundation level it has placed our total financial viability at risk. We need to know what the financial bases are for our clients and we cannot be subject to apparently arbitrary cuts without considerable negative impact on the lives of those already subject to enormous difficulties.

Conclusion and desired outcome

1. The enquiry is requested to conclude that the main effect of this reform has resulted in both reduced funding and reduced quality of service for a significant number of former ATLAS clients and new Transition to Work and Community Participation clients and that this has been achieved through a process that has been inadequate, inappropriate and poorly managed.

2. Restoration of funding to former levels should be implemented with immediate effect and the threat of future funding cuts to PSO clients should be withdrawn.
3. That the new Transition to Work and the Community Participation funding levels be reassessed by an independent process that involves full consultation with all stakeholders and is based on transparent criteria and outcomes.
4. That any future reforms or funding changes be preceded by a transparent and timely process of consultation with all involved parties.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David L Hancock", written over a horizontal line.

David L Hancock
CEO