

Submission
No 56

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date received: 9/08/2010

Partially Confidential

STATEMENT OF CONCERN

A reply to the NSW Legislative Council's
Inquiry into Services provided or funded by the
Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care

Written & Proposed
by

Occupation: CARER.

Overview:

This submission to the Standing Committee on Social Issues "Inquiry into Services provided or funded by the Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care" (ADHC) is a "*Statement of Concern*" (S of C)!

The S of C is based on information and experienced from 10 years working within the Disability Sector, 18 years experience as a secondary Carer to a Person with Exceptional High Support Needs, 18 years membership of various Associations purported to represent various factions within the Disability Sector and above all listening to issues/concerns raised by Carers.

In response to the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Social Issues in this S of C, I have elected to address major flaws in the overall Management, Operations and Financial Reporting of State and Federal funded Associations/Services (Non-Government Organisations (NGO's)) and availability of Audited Financial Accounts, henceforth referred to as "Services provided or funded by ADHC.

Before attempting to address the *Terms of Reference*, it is important to summarise the inception of Ageing Disability and Home Care in a simplistic but factual format. In the early 1980's Disability separated from Health becoming a Department in its own right within the NSW Government. From this point the system in relation to Disability has evolved in an extraordinary and extremely disjointed "ADD-HOCK" manner.

Governments of both persuasions, have in the past, held numerous investigative committees, conducted public consultations, held public reviews etc, all falling substantially short in addressing real needs of people they are purported to support, being completely lost in bureaucratic red tape as the bureaucrats fell over each other to achieve preconceived outcomes in accordance with Government policy. Preconceived outcomes do not address the needs of the disabled or Carers or develop and progress a system of care to meeting the needs of PWD and Carers.

A statement made to the writer, while working in the disability sector, by a senior advisor to the then Minister of the Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care (now ADHC) in 2002, Hon. Carnell Tebbutt M.P., summed up the situation as much then as now: "*The system has so many band-aids attached, they are starting to fall off*"!

However, there have been a number of significant achievements by Government over the years with the introduction and welcomed laws pertaining to the disability sector and the introduction of both Federal and State Disability Services Standards and accreditation of Services. Sadly, in so many instances, these have become just words in rhetoric but a step in the right direction due to the lack of funding & resources to make it possible.

Over the past three (3) decades Government has thrown money into establishing numerous Services (so called peak bodies) and self-advocacies of everything but the common cold! Simply value/outcome for money is utterly criminal.

Any other Matters 1. (g): SERVICES: Advocacies/Peak Bodies/Systemic & Self Advocacies/small Government funded Independent Living Services.

There are upwards of 180 Services provided or funded by ADHC within NSW.

What's wrong?

Services within the current structure are a gross waste of money! These Services require maximum expense while returning minimal, repeat minimal outcomes. In a sector, hideously under funded, these Services are a money pit into which Government continues to throw good money after bad. The proliferation of Services over the past three (3) decades has resulted in them becoming financially unviable and inept.

Question: Are these Services relevant in today's environment?

Answer: resignedly No!

1. Consider the economy of scale that exists when:
 - a) Each Service pays out tens of thousands of dollars on rent;
 - b) Each Service pays out thousands of dollars on office equipment;
 - c) Each Service pays out thousands of dollars in insurance;
 - d) Each Service has a CEO (some with 3 to 4 Staff pay their CEO's in excess of \$100,000 + Benefits);
 - e) Each Service has at least one vehicle (usually one exclusively for the CEO);
 - f) Each Service has its paid accountant;
 - g) Each Service has its paid auditors;
 - h) Each Service has its receptionist;
 - i) Each Service has its information librarian;
 - j) Each Service has its brochures and translated in to numerous languages (of which very few are ever requested);
 - k) Each Service distributes its brochures to other advocates
 - l) Each Service has its Librarian;
 - m) Each Service spends thousands of man hours thus hundreds of thousands of dollars yearly writing submissions for additional funding for which the funding bodies know in advance they will not be granted. In the majority of instances these submissions are for negligible amounts committing Services to spend additional funds to achieve the designated outcome;
 - n) Each Service spends tens of thousands of dollars yearly sending their CEO and staff to local and interstate Conferences*;
 - o) Each Service spends tens of thousands of dollars yearly training their CEO and staff;
 - p) Each Service spends thousands of dollars yearly educating board members;
 - q) Each Service spends thousands of dollars yearly on reviewing and implementing Strategic Development plans;
 - r) Each Service spends thousands of dollars yearly reviewing and developing Policy and Procedures;
 - s) Services taking memberships of other Services who then report funds raised from membership while in fact it is public money;
 - t) Each Service spends thousands of dollars on developing their website and ISP payments;
 - u) Each Service etc, etc, etc

** In saying the number of instances where six (6) or seven (7) representatives from the same organisation attend information sharing morning teas is an appalling waste of manpower is a gross understatement!*

2. At the Board level:
 - a) The Services are riddled with less than professional members;
 - b) Positions go unfilled or filled by inexperienced and unsuitable Personal the "I'll do it if no one else wants to do it" syndrome;
 - c) Board Members ignorant to relationship between Board and day-to-day Management separation;
 - d) Board members becoming involved with the day-to-day operations;
 - e) Restrictions (discrimination) on who is eligible to suit on boards;
 - f) Boards granting 40% to 60% salaries increases go unquestioned/unreported to Government;
 - g) Board being stacking by CEO's with personal acquaintances;
 - h) CEO's/Staff members of one Service sitting on each another Services Board;
 - i) Pertaining to f) and g) above CEO's being promoted to positions of Executive Director giving them obsessive directional power within their Service;
 - j) Boards being dictatorial to the point of manipulation to achieve personal goals over and above the members;
 - k) Boards becoming factional (specifically in small one issue advocacies);
 - l) Infighting within boards as to their roles and responsibilities;
 - m) Boards being dominated by long time Presidents; and
 - n) Expenses incurred for board meeting is hidden and unreasonably high.
3. In relation to f), g) and h) there are cases known where an Executive Director has let Government funded contracts to immediate kin and/or employed immediate kin in management positions. Tender may have been called for and positions advertised but outcomes were pre-established.
4. While funding to Services has been severely criticised as inadequate in the past, by Service providers, however it is amazing as to how some can preside over lavish Festive celebrations with minimal private funding. This has to be at Government thus public expense.
5. Financial Reporting: Services are required to submit Audited Financial reports on a yearly basis. However:
 - a) Figures while Audited do not give a clear picture of the expenses incurred mainly due to the structure of reporting within the General Ledger; and
 - b) Service provider's financial reports should be made available on their websites as it is expenditure of public money.
 - c) Senior Management salaries should be reported separately to that of staff members as CEO's of Private Companies salary packages are. This will eliminate ridiculous salaries being paid to two (2) and three (3) man/woman shows!
6. Government appointed Advisory Councils, these Councils purported to be Peak bodies representing people with a disability and Carers to various Government and Government Departments. If anything they are out of touch with the needs of the people. Again more interested in pushing personal agenda, eg. When questioned about an issue, one representative of the Council replied "O' we have known about that for years". What have they done about it? Nothing! It may not be important to them but is important to thousands of others.
7. Membership of Government Appointed Advisory Councils do not in any way what so ever represent a cross section of the disability sector weighted heavily with academia and politically correct appointments.

8. ADHC themselves are one of the biggest waste of funding. Within the framework of this inquest it should be sufficient to request a full inquiry into ADHC's operations and waste of funding in name changes, office equipment, office refurbishment, office relocation, appointment of staff etc, etc.
9. The Historical and current delivery, waiting lists and program quality between Service provided or funded by ADHC 1. (a).1: Variation costs between services is unacceptably horrendous. The difference between purpose built respite/accommodation is un-acceptable. Maintenance of premises is appalling. The sale of John Williams, Wahroonga, grossed \$9.88 Million. Government combined Metro North and Metro West so that funds could be moved from one area to another. Further, Government reported \$6 million plus remained unspent. Since then there has been no reported expenditure of this money which was to be held separately to all other Government funds. Additionally, funded Services have developed in a very Ad-Hoc manner to meet the needs of the Mild to moderate disabled, e.g. Post School options. This makes it extremely difficult when seeking a place for a person with high support needs or classified with exceptional needs. Problems which arise are, inadequate change facilities, inadequate storage areas for equipment, narrow hallways in non-purpose built houses, inappropriate mix of clients where the person with exceptional needs is very vulnerable. Proximity to home is a major issue as a suitable service may be found but then travel time can exceed four (4) to Five (5) hours per day for the Parent/Carer. Completely unacceptable and impractical.
10. ADHC Regional Areas 1. (b).2: The write would have seriously contemplated relocating to a regional area. However the serious lack of services for anyone with high support needs was judged to be seriously lacking in all aspects of services and expertise.
11. Compliance with Disability Service Standards 1. (d): ADHC are quick to quote the standards but very slow in implementing them on the broader scale, specifically in the area of community access. Regardless of requests to have Disabled Change rooms incorporated in access compliance in shopping centres and community centres there is no change room suitable for people with high support needs over the age of 8/9 years of age this access to their community is denied.
12. Adequacy of complaint handling, grievance mechanisms and ADHC funded advocacy services1. (c): Advocacy services see point 1 through 8 above. The writers experience in complaint handling would have to be one of the biggest jokes witnessed from department level to Ministerial level. The impracticality of ADHC/HACC suggestions followed by false information given to the Minister was appalling. Requesting a review was a joke. There was never a face to face meeting, correspondence was re-read and an agreement reached by who ever that the correspondence was correct. Is this a review?

