

**INQUIRY INTO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL
DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME AND THE PROVISION
OF DISABILITY SERVICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

My brother, _____ is a long term resident of _____. Prior to living at _____ he lived at _____ in _____. _____ is 55 years old and has lived most of his adult life at the above facilities. _____ was born with a severe intellectual disability. He is unable to talk and care for himself independently. He has self harmed on several occasions, by cutting himself and most recently he pulled some of his teeth out. His care needs can range from simple to complex depending on his internal mental and physical state. Whilst living at the above facilities, _____ has received outstanding care and support from many staff. These wonderful people have got to know him very well. Because of the length of time these people have known _____ they know his likes and dislikes, they know how to care for his physical and social needs. More importantly they know when his behaviours are changing from a normal state to a negative state. For decades, our family has lived with the uncertainty of the closure of _____ and _____. Indeed, we made the decision to move _____ from _____ to _____ because we were led to believe its closure was imminent. _____ was a great location for _____ to live, given our mother, prior to her death lived nearby in a Residential Aged Care Facility. This enabled mum and _____ to visit each other very frequently. Much to our disappointment, _____ did not close and had we known this, we would not have moved _____ to _____ when we did. After we moved _____, it became almost impossible for mum to see _____ because of the considerable distance between _____ and _____. This distressed her. It took a bit of time for _____ to get settled into his new surroundings at _____. However, he is now very settled there and has great relationships with the people he lives with and with the people who care for him. _____ is like one big happy family. This is evident to me whenever I visit. The team there are in constant contact with me, even though I live in a remote location in another state. Whilst the principles behind both the NDIS and the decision to accommodate people like _____ in Group Homes in the Community are based largely on good grounds and will work for many people, they are not suited to all people who are currently living at Large Facilities. The underlying issue is that small group homes do not have the staffing infrastructure that the large facilities have. The staff in these large facilities work very well at supporting the many needs of people with complex care needs like _____. In the lead up to the move from _____ to the proposed smaller home model, the teams involved have been very open and transparent about what would happen and when. The real issue for me was that these good people could not promise me that _____ would get the same level of care that he is provided with now. This was largely because someone new would be delivering this care. In the interests of _____ health and well being, our family have worked in good faith around moving him from his current home to a new home. We were very lucky to be able to select a home for _____ in _____. _____ knows the area, but more importantly, many people in the area know him. Family friends and a lot of former and current staff of _____ live locally as well. The team of people we have worked with over the past years have been amazing to say the least. They have kept us informed and have helped _____ make this very hard decision in a very collaborative manner. Whilst I have never been a proponent of the closure of the large centres, Me and my immediate family have gone along with this significant change for _____. It is now very disturbing and disappointing to see this project off track and indeed no longer one that I have a lot of faith in. At the end of the day, the NSW Government and its Ministers owe my brother a duty of care. They owe all of the residents involved in this process a duty of care. They seem to have forgotten this. They no longer appear to understand that they are very needy people attached to what they are doing. The current situation needs to be resolved. Will a new tender for the building of the homes be the answer? I am not convinced. I implore all involved in this inquiry to look more closely at the impact on the very vulnerable people attached to the decisions that are being made. In closing I would like to end with a quote by Mahatma Gandhi "A nation's greatest weakness is measured by how it treats its weakest members". Please think about this as you undertake this very important piece of work now before you.

Yours sincerely