

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

REFERENCES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Planning Options and Services for People Ageing with a Disability

SUBMISSION

SUBMISSION NUMBER: 77

SUBMITTER

Fay McKenzie

Department of the Senate
Po Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Senator Boyce

12/10/2010

Dear M/s Boyce

Following your visit to Toowoomba, I have written this submission.

SENATE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Inquiry into planning options and services for people Ageing with a Disability

Terms of Reference

On 30 September 2010 the Senate referred the following matter to the Community Affairs References Committee for inquiry and report by 31 March 2011.

Access to options for and services to assist people with a disability and their carers to plan for the future, including;

(A) Inadequacies in the choice and funding of planning options currently available to people ageing with a disability and their carers;

As ageing parents of a person with a Disability we have been searching for a suitable solution for ongoing safe, secure accommodation in the Toowoomba region.

Accommodation avenues my husband and I have investigated.

In 1993, we placed our son in an Endeavour residential home where he was expected to purchase and prepare his own food. Unfortunately he did not have the capability to do this so we withdrew him from this service.

We placed our son in a home privately funded, unfortunately although he enjoyed the company of the other members and appeared to be fed adequately, there was no night supervision and as we found out later he would stay up and watch movies through the night. He was regular in waking up for work the next morning but the combination of this hectic life caused him to lose weight. when he(at 159 cms)dropped weight to 46 kilograms we withdrew him from the home.

We tried leaving our son to rent a house with his sister, unfortunately her health broke down and together they could not cope.

Other inadequate options ,we have explored

Endeavour closed their waiting lists for accommodation except for disabled people with Government Packages, our son was very low on the list and would not have been eligible for a package.

We thought about leaving our home to Disability Services Queensland, but had observed poor results, with houses becoming rundown and clients not being well looked after (at this time(1999) we felt accountability of staff was not satisfactory)

We had the option of leaving our son on the Disability Services Queensland doorstep ; Again there was the option of him being placed with other people left on the street, as he is very vulnerable with doing things to please others, we felt this was an unsafe situation.

Another option was to place him in a retirement village, when he was old enough, (another 10 years, when we will be 84years). We have a disabled friend living in a retirement home, it is proving to be very lonely for her, as the other retirees don't readily communicate with her, and she has little community access.

Respite facilities with Breakaway (a service group in Toowoomba)has been very helpful, they have funding for the older carer's program, and have provided respite for 2 weeks a year for the last 3years

(B) Ways to ensure the continued Quality of life for people with disability as they and a their carers age;

(C)The types of options and services that could be developed to help people with a disability and their carers to plan for the future; and

The purchase of The Anden a B&B in North St Toowoomba in 2009 with funding from the Federal Government and delivered by the State Government then purchased by the Disability and Communities Queensland, has proved to be a wonderful opportunity for our son and five other residents with a disability to have a safe ,secure permanent home.

The Disability and Communities Queensland together with the Y M C A provide the maintenance services for the Anden.

Breakaway Toowoomba provide the 24/7 services, including transport to the daily activities.

I don't know the details of the funding for the Anden

The residents pay \$ 260 .00 per fortnight rent to the Y M C A \$140.00 for food \$100.00 for transport their rent assistance covers the utilities

Our son has settled in very well, loves the company of the others and he is remaining healthy ,the ensuite rooms are large.

*Please note Y M C A should read Y W C A.

They are able to grow vegetables, have had a pool table and Gym equipment donated .
Meals are carefully planned with dietitian input.
The residents make their lunches and are assisted to do their own washing and folding,
they are able to use the phone and can contact the carer at night if necessary.

The parents of the residents of the Anden have been supportive to the staff, (having many meetings) this gives both carers and the residents confidence in the management of the Anden.

This has been a wonderful opportunity for our family , our son was in a gray area ,not a high level disabled person able to receive a package and not low level to manage on his own (even with daily carers to help).

We feel having respite with Breakaway on the Older Carers program was a great help in our son becoming adjusted to living away from home ,but also in allowing Breakaway the opportunity with selection of suitable people with a Disability as residents for the Anden.

(D)Any other matters which would assist carers to find an adequate and appropriate answer to the question 'What happens when /we can no longer care?.'

I would like to recommend the development of residential accommodation as found with the Anden., to be funded by the Government with all the preliminary care required to make it successful.

Why some problems may occur with ageing carers allowing their person with a Disability to move into accommodation?

Sometimes, ageing carers become dependent on their Disabled person and are frightened to let go.(an emotional tie)

Sometimes ageing carers depend on the financial benefit of using the disabled persons pension to live.

Sometimes ageing carers are frightened of their Disabled person being encouraged into bad practices .

We suggest that people with a disability should be encouraged to take the opportunity of moving into accommodation when the parents are reasonably young to avoid these emotional stresses

We hope this submission may be helpful to you in making decisions for the future needs of ageing disabled people and their ageing carers.

Yours in good faith

Fay and Peter Mckenzie