

JK 2/8/08

Please **HELP** us

My name is Rhonda and I live on a 25 acre farm halfway between Bathurst and Lithgow with my 28 year old daughter who has high functioning autism. I was also the primary carer for my eighty five year old mother but she is now in an aged care hostel in Bathurst.

I lived here on my farm with my other three children and a partner. All have now left, my children are working and studying interstate or overseas. My partner left me for another woman who had an "uncomplicated" life. I have no extended family or neighbours interested in assisting me with her needs.

I have to drive my daughter 25 kilometres to the nearest independent living skills services and for respite occasionally. I had to resign my professional management career when she left school and now exist on a carers pension.

I have been diagnosed with a degenerated vertabras in my back. Driving and lifting exacerbate my back problems, causing mobility issues. I have been advised to sell my farm and move into town, so both of us can access services more easily. I tried to sell my farm so I can buy a smaller more accessible place for me but as the market is so low, I have to remain there until the real estate options improve.

I currently use both Interchange and Community Options services but neither nor anyone else has the ability to plan for her life with me. Her uncertain future gives me nightmares and I am living on egg shells not knowing who will help me with her future.

I want to see accomodation options in place for my daughter as I have an unpredictable future with my own health. I don't want her housed outside Bathurst as this community has been her home for twenty years and change is horrendously hard for her to cope with causing behavioural consequences.

I want to see some planning for her future as I am finding her needs so incompatible with mine as I age and my health deteriorates. I belive she has the same right as me, to a quality life both now and into the future.

I ask that structures be put permanently in place so I can make both our futures possible.

Rhonda