

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF  
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

This petition of certain concerned citizens of Australia

Draws to the attention of the House:

The inadequate knowledge, research and health services, relating to prevention and treatment of feeding tube dependency, in infancy and early childhood in Australia's Health System. Feeding Tube Dependency is an undesired side effect of tube feeding. This dependency leaves an infant, child and their family trapped on a round about of tube feeding with no desire to eat and drink orally. The current therapy approaches are clearly not working. The Graz Model of tube weaning from Austria is becoming internationally recognized as the only way to rapidly wean children from their tube dependency. This treatment needs to be available in Australia.

We therefore ask the House to investigate:

- The numbers of tube fed infants and children in Australia, and their level of tube dependency.
- The financial cost of long-term tube feeding on a family and the Australian Health System.
- The emotional and psychological effect on families with a tube fed child.
- The reason tube feeding is being more frequently used in our Health System, rather than intensive support for oral feeding.
- Why there is no comprehensive exit strategy for individuals to remove the tube once the purpose has been served.
- Why there is currently no recognition by relevant therapists and experts that tube dependency is a major problem for children and their families in Australia.
- Initiating support in our Health System to start researching and implementing intensive weaning programs, based on the Graz Model of Tube Weaning from Austria.