

I wish to make the following information available to the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee that is to look into a number of matters that will include the appropriateness of young people with disabilities being accommodated in residential aged care facilities.

I have a particular interest in this inquiry as I have friends who are the parents of a young girl who approximately two years ago suffered acquired brain injury as the result of a sudden asthma attack.

This young lady who was studying for a Bachelor of Arts in order to become a primary school teacher, was a member of an amateur theatrical group, a leader in her local community, and just a most beautiful girl and has been living in a nursing home for the last two years. Fortunately her parents with the assistance of many organisations and friends have now converted a section of their home to enable Michelle to live at home.

The two years of living in a nursing home has frightened her parents into concern, for not only Michelle, but other young people who will be forced to live in these conditions for the rest of their restrictive lives.

The plight of these young people who are presently not provided with purpose built accommodation suitable for young people is clearly an increasing problem. Dr. Bronwyn Morkham the spokesperson for the Young people in Nursing Homes said "Current estimates indicate that if nothing is done, we'll have 10,000 young Australians living in aged care facilities by 2007 and these people are unable to get the rehabilitative support they need, these young people languish in nursing homes when all they want is to return to their communities."

I am bringing this to your attention as I feel that it is important to ensure that the committee is aware of the opinion of this particular citizen who only learnt of the plight of young people in this situation since my friends daughter sustained her injury. I certainly hope the committee will ensure this section of our community will be favourably treated in the report of this committee.

John Myles McEvoy