

The Secretary  
Senate Community Affairs References Committee

**Your reference: Reference (c) of the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry.**

**My Submission:**

My niece has a 29 year old daughter who has cerebral palsy and epilepsy. She has very little receptive language, expresses herself with a few signs, resulting in aggravated frustration when trying to express her emotions.

She lived at home until she was 12 and during this period her grandfather, my brother, was her only conduit to the real world. God! how he loved her.

Eventually a place was found for her in a centre specifically designed for young disabled people, where her needs for medication and the basic living functions of bathing, toileting and feeding were provided.

She was forced to return home when that centre closed down.

In 1988 she was transferred to an aged care facility, which was and is unable to provide the service that she requires and where her only company is elderly people who are nearing the end of their lives, many of whom suffer from dementia.

My brother visited her every second day. The joy and happiness displayed by her when her grandfather entered her room, had to be seen to be believed. Unfortunately my brother (Poppa to her) was diagnosed with cancer and he died in February 2001. She has no way of expressing herself but she has feelings and we can only imagine her disappointment and frustration, when the door to her room opens and her Poppa no longer appears.

It has been recommended by an Aged Care Assessment Team that she be given access to specialist disability accommodation in the community which could provide most appropriate care for her age and disability whilst being able to accommodate her specific physical, social, emotional and development needs.

To return home is no longer an option. My niece's husband walked out on her, leaving her with a disabled daughter and two other daughters to raise. She now has grandchildren to look after and her mother moved in with her after Poppa died.

I'm sure my niece's daughter is not the only young woman with disabilities that has been forced to live in unsuitable conditions in aged peoples accommodation.

I believe it is the responsibility of the Federal Government to provide specialist disability accommodation in the community for these young people as recommended by the Aged Care Assessment Team.

Mrs. Beverley Elphick