

14th July 2004

The Secretary  
Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee  
Suite 5159  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

**Re: Inquiry into Aged Care Terms of Reference**

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to place on record my concern, as a service provider to local aged residents of North Ryde, regarding "the adequacy of the Home and Community Care programme in meeting the current and projected needs of the elderly."

My submission comes from the perspective of a "grassroots worker" in direct and frequent contact with HACC eligible clients - I have worked for the past six years as a partially-HACC funded Aged Care Worker in the Northern Sydney region at North Ryde Community Aid, covering the areas of North Ryde, East Ryde and Macquarie Park. I provide the following services to residents (and their carers) who are at risk of inappropriate or premature admission to residential care for reasons of frail age and disability:

- information on community support options
- referral to appropriate services
- follow-up monitoring
- advocacy, particularly for those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD)
- case co-ordination
- short-term case-management

My concerns are:

1. Increasingly, my clients frequently have difficulty in obtaining an essential **home cleaning** service through the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care. As a worker, I feel frustrated that this service is so often unavailable to those who are most at risk in the home due to mobility, balance and frailty issues. In addition, the eligibility criteria seems to have become more restrictive over the past few years and now, since a waiting list process no longer exists, when a client is refused service I am then required to phone again the following month to make a new referral, each time providing the same, and often exhaustive, amount of information to the intake person to record on the Home Care data base. The official reason for refusal of service is always given as "lack of resources in your area."

2. Also increasingly, my clients often have difficulty in obtaining **community transport**, in particular transport that provides them access to essential medical and allied medical services. Our local HACC service provider, Ryde Hunters Hill Community Transport, is an excellent service which turns itself inside out to try and meet the ever increasing needs of residents in their area. One example of their ongoing difficulty to provide essential service is that because of increased demand and lack of resources they are no longer able to transport individual patients to podiatry at Ryde Hospital. Ryde Hospital offers a limited transport service to its patients but is often not able to assist with new referrals. It is well known that healthy feet are essential to a successful falls prevention strategy yet inability to access this service, due to insufficient resources/funding, again places these vulnerable older people and their carers, at risk.

In summary, from my local perspective, the resources of the Home and Community Care programme are inadequate to meet the current, yet alone projected, home care and transport needs of the elderly in our area.

regards

Nuala Williams  
Aged Care Worker