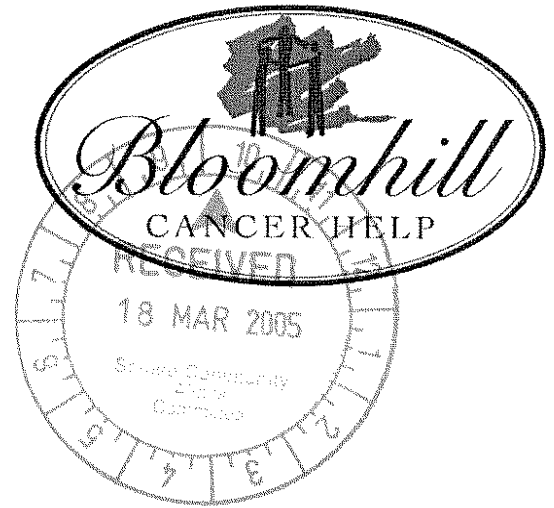


Mr. Elton Humphery
The Secretary
Senate Community Affairs References Committee
Suite S1 59
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



Dear Mr. Humphery,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to introduce you to Bloomhill Cancer Help, which I consider epitomizes the model of care which addresses all of the Terms of Reference in your Inquiry. Let me introduce you to Bloomhill.


Bloomhill is a self funded charity with public benevolence status and was founded in 1997 by Margaret Gargan a registered nurse who was in charge of a cancer ward at The Prince Charles Hospital in 1987. Margaret experienced the diagnosis of breast cancer personally and vowed at that time that one day she would set up an organisation that really supports people how they need to be supported ie from the time of diagnosis onwards. Margaret set up 3 other models prior to Bloomhill. (See enclosed C.V. in brief)

Bloomhill is situated on a beautiful 10 acre property that is a permanent place of residence. It is managed by a management committee and the property is owned by a charitable trust. Bloomhill is funded mainly by its five opportunity shops and a range of ongoing fundraising initiatives. The reason for developing the Bloomhill model was to fill in the gaps and complement other agencies providing care for people diagnosed with cancer as well as their families. Bloomhill is now 7 years old and has cared for over 1780 people and is currently involved in a variety of services in the care and support for 464 people.

Bloomhill is an orthodox medical model that provides complementary therapies and support groups. In 2004 Bloomhill conducted a client satisfaction survey which showed what a significant positive impact the Bloomhill approach was having on people's quality of life. It also indicated some other areas of fine tuning and other effective initiatives for implementation. We have already introduced some new programs this year such as a "Fun and Friendship" club and "Art and Healing" lessons on our deck.

I would like to extend an invitation to visit the Bloomhill community. I know that Margaret would be delighted to personally present the client satisfaction survey and a powerpoint presentation of the Bloomhill model to you either at Bloomhill or in Canberra. Thank you once again for this opportunity and I look forward to further communication with you.

Yours Sincerely


Patrick Buick
General Manager

16/3/05

Patron:
Raelene Boyle MBE
Junior Patron:
Holly Thompson
President
RJJ (Bob) Brennan
General Manager:
Patrick Buick
Founder:
Margaret Gargan RN

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SENATE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS REFERENCES COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO SERVICES AND TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR PERSONS WITH CANCER

a) The delivery of services and options for treatment for persons diagnosed with cancer, with particular reference to:

i. The efficacy of a multi-disciplinary approach to cancer treatment.

When faced with an illness like cancer, above all we must realize one thing: we treat the person, not simply the disease, and therefore a multi-disciplinary approach is essential. Bloomhill Cancer Help has had a multi-disciplinary approach since its inception. Bloomhill provides professional care and support from the time of diagnosis onwards.

Bloomhill has a formal partnership with BlueCare Palliative Care Service and together we are providing a comprehensive body, mind, and spirit healthcare approach. BlueCare is immediately contacted as soon as any specialised palliative care nursing is needed.

The Bloomhill Model:

People come to Bloomhill from a variety of sources. One of the key ingredients of the Bloomhill model is an initial assessment by a registered nurse and then referrals are made to the various services and support modalities that Bloomhill has to offer. We care for the whole family not just the person with the disease and encourage them to consider the value of the meditation classes and support groups. Other services offered are: counselling, art therapy, music therapy, massage, reflexology, reiki, carers group, retreats, a fun & friendship club and art classes.

We are also increasing the possibility of having other social contexts developed as well as just being able to sit on our deck or in the garden and just have a chat and/or a cup of tea or coffee.

We also have an extensive volunteer program with over 250 volunteers fulfilling several roles such as: transport, palliative care respite, buddying for individuals, admin, fundraising and working in our op shops. Bloomhill is self funded through 5 op shops & a warehouse, donations, fundraising activities and bequests.

ii. The role and desirability of a case manager/case co-ordinator to assist patients and/or their primary caregivers.

The Sunshine Coast District Health Service is in the process of developing the model whereby there will be a case manager who will ensure that people are referred to the appropriate agencies. Bloomhill Cancer Help will be an integral part of this service. We currently work very closely with all oncology wards in the surrounding areas and closely liaised with the East Coast Cancer Centre, where people are treated for radiotherapy on the Sunshine Coast. The professional staff meet on a regular basis to discuss the progress of the people who come to

Bloomhill. This will encompass working closely with the allocated case manager and their GP and Specialist.

iii. Differing models and best practice for addressing psycho/social factors in patient care.

The Bloomhill model is focused on quality of life and living. It has evolved in the last seven years to become today's multi disciplinary body, mind, and spirit healthcare. It is a model that effectively addresses the psycho/social factors in regards to both patients and carers and is based on the "*Bloomhill philosophy of facilitating no regrets.*" We recognize that it is the "if onlys" that cripple us. "If only I had said this," "If only I had done that." Because at Bloomhill people get involved as closely as possible to the time of diagnosis, we are able to give them gentle guidance and direction. If they do happen to lose a loved one, they can have a normal and healthy grieving process. We are constantly striving for new ways of identifying and assessing needs. We conduct brainstorming sessions with staff, clients, volunteers, carers and the general community.

iv. Differing models and best practice in delivering services and treatment options to Regional Australia and Indigenous Australians.

Bloomhill has been set up in Regional Australia on the Sunshine Coast and can easily be adapted to look after Indigenous Australians as well. Bloomhill is a transportable model of healthcare that can be developed anywhere. Margaret Gargan, our founder and Manager of Care and Education, is going to Leura in the Blue Mountains in the first weekend of April to assess the possibility of implementing a similar model there. Bloomhill will always remain a specialised centre of excellence, but will not diminish its philosophy by setting up branches in other areas.

v. Current barriers to the implementation of best practice in the above fields.

In some areas of the present healthcare system the reappears to be a misconception that an integrative healthcare model may not be feasible. However, we believe Bloomhill is showing that it is not only possible but because of its focus on assessing and meeting the needs of the different people affected by cancer the model is proving to be an effective direction to develop and implement.

It is believed that one of the successes of the Bloomhill model is the fact that it is self funded. It is felt that other models may be less flexible and may have too many restrictions.

All of our fees are kept very low to ensure accessibility to our patients and their families. If children are involved, the whole family is sponsored, and if people genuinely cannot afford the care, they are also sponsored. In the last seven years we have never refused care to anyone.

Funding is always an issue but it also presents opportunities for the general community to be involved and committed and even offer some professional skills and experience in voluntary capacities.

b) How less conventional and complementary cancer treatments can be assessed and judged, with particular reference to:

i. The extent to which less conventional and complementary treatments are researched, or are supported by research.

Bloomhill has a positive organizational culture and engages the services of a range of professional staff and therapists. This allows for open exchange between less conventional and traditional medical ‘treatments’. It is felt in this context even the word ‘patient’ could be restrictive as it implies something that needs to be healed rather than emphasizing opportunities for growth and evolution.

In this regard we are constantly reviewing the effectiveness of the model and the relevant contribution that can be made by various participants. One very relevant and specific assessment is currently being made in the area of Music Therapy.

Bloomhill is currently discussing the possibility of joint research with East Coast Cancer Radiotherapy Centre.

Sarah Burns, BMus (Th), our registered music therapist, has implemented music therapy programmes for cancer patients, their carers, our bereaved clients and our volunteers at Bloomhill for the past 7 years.

Currently she is undertaking empirical research in music therapy as a PhD candidate at the University of Newcastle, NSW within the Faculty of Health.

Sarah has recently completed the fieldwork on her exploratory and investigative study to evaluate the impact of an 8-week group music therapy programme with recently diagnosed (within 1–12 months) breast cancer patients.

This study has utilized a mixed method approach of quantitative pre/post psychosocial measures and physiological sampling of salivary sIgA (a marker of immunity) and cortisol (a marker of stress) and a qualitative methodology approach of ‘in depth’ interviews and focus group. Analyses of her data are ongoing with the initial findings of her research to be presented at The 11th World Congress of Music Therapy, to be held in Brisbane in July of this year.

A previous ‘pilot’ study carried out by Sarah and a team of investigators at The Bristol Cancer Help Centre in the UK (Burns, Harbuz, Hucklebridge & Bunt, 2001) indicated that a ‘one off’ music therapy session can increase cancer patients levels of energy, decrease levels of tension, reduce levels of stress, boost immune function and improve cancer patients overall sense of well being.

Sarah’s present study is building on the findings of her initial research.

Sarah Burns, BMus (Th), R.M.T and Barry Farrin, B.S.Sc M.App.Sc Grad Dip in Coun M.A.I.W.C.W, the counsellor at Bloomhill will be conducting further research into the efficacy of the Bloomhill model.

References

Burns. S.J.I., Harkzuz. M.S., Hucklebridge, F and Bunt. L (2001). A pilot study into the therapeutic effects of music therapy at a cancer help center. *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*. Vol. 7 (1) 48-56.

ii. **The efficacy of common but less conventional approaches either as primary treatments or as adjuvant/complementary therapies.**

Bloomhill is all about encouraging empowerment and personal responsibility for ones own health. We strongly advocate that all of our patients access whatever orthodox models of care and treatments that are offered to them. It is all about patients giving it their best shot and taking an active role in their disease process. The role of Bloomhill is as adjuvant therapies.

iii. **The legitimate role of government in the field of less conventional cancer treatment.**

Bloomhill is passionate about the fact that governments should not have to provide everything for the community. Bloomhill is a community supporting the community, which is ultimately a win-win situation, because the Sunshine Coast community now backs Bloomhill through donations to our Op-Shops, fundraising activities, and volunteering.

One valuable area Bloomhill has accessed is through grants. Since 1998 Bloomhill has acquired resources that are available through the Gambling Community grants to the tune of \$232,000 for our beautiful 10 acre property. The government can encourage other self funded charities, such as Bloomhill, as well as give public support for such organizations.

Supporting Documents:

Bloomhill Kit including newsletters and brochures, Certificate of Incorporation, Certificate of Registration as a Charity, Exempt Institution Registration, Endorsement as a deductible gift recipient, Business Registration, and letters of support from politicians.

Curriculum Vitae in brief

Margaret Gargan

Margaret has been nursing for the past 40 years. For 30 of those years she has been specialising in palliative care. She first became involved whilst working with the Blue Nursing Service in 1979 and presented her first paper at a national conference in Melbourne in 1984. Since then she has had the opportunity to present papers at international (Cancer Nursing Conference in London in 1988) and national conferences.

Margaret has for the past five years been a guest lecturer at The University of Queensland involved in the education of 1st year medical students.

Along with a team of people Margaret has instigated four models for palliative care. First was at ward 4B in The Prince Charles Hospital in Brisbane. The second was Karuna Hospice Service in Brisbane along with a Buddhist monk Pende Hawter.

Margaret was the coordinator of palliative Care Services for the Sunshine Coast District Health Service for four and a half years. Margaret is now the founder and Manager of Care and Education of Bloomhill Cancer Help in Buderim which she founded in 1997.

In 1992 Margaret was made a Paul Harris Fellow by Rotary International for her service to the community in particular her vision regarding palliative care.

In 2001 Margaret was awarded a Fisher Community Australia Day award.

In 2001 Margaret received a Commonwealth Recognition Award for Senior Australians.

In 2002 Bloomhill Cancer Help was awarded the Inaugural Des Scanlan Memorial Award for the most outstanding community organisation.

In 2003 Margaret was awarded a Centenary of Federation Medal for her service to health.

In 2004 Margaret was awarded an Honorary Senior Fellowship from The University of The Sunshine Coast University.

Margaret is also an Ambassador for Angel Flight who fly people from other parts of Australia for week long programs at Bloomhill.

Margaret was a finalist in the Sunshine Coast Professional Business Women of the Year in 2004.

Margaret was awarded a Queensland Regional Achievers Award on the 15 October 2004.