

26 June 2006

The Secretary  
Senate Community Affairs References Committee  
P O Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: ENQUIRY INTO THE FUNDING AND OPERATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH STATE/TERRITORY DISABILITY AGREEMENT**

As parents of a mildly intellectually disabled 27 year old daughter, we would like to offer this short letter as a submission into the above enquiry. Our particular interest is in the Terms of Reference **b.** pertaining to accommodation for the disabled.

Recently, in Toowoomba, a survey was made of the needs of intellectually disabled adults regarding accommodation. The results of this Research Analysis have been published in a booklet entitled "**An Analysis of Accommodation Needs of Adults with an Intellectual Disability in Toowoomba and Surrounding Areas**". (We will refer to this document as the 'Research Analysis' for the purpose of this submission). If you don't already have a copy, it can be obtained by phoning 07 4635 8008 or online at <http://www.usq.edu.au/sciences/research/crrah> then under 'Publications 2006'.

One concern we have with the Research Analysis is that we are sure it hasn't reached all those it set out to survey as there doesn't appear to be any sort of database of people in the area with an intellectual disability. We know from personal experience that there are many of these people who have 'slipped through the system' and are not registered with any service providers and receive no assistance in any way whatsoever.

In our case we have our daughter living at home with us and are, for the time being, happy with this arrangement. However, we are aware that our daughter will desire, and need, to leave home sometime in the near future – perhaps within the next five years. As we age and are no longer able to care for her, or if something happened to us, this need escalates enormously. We have no family in the area and no older siblings to take care of her. At this point in time we see no suitable accommodation available in Toowoomba and no plans for such accommodation in the future.

We are painfully aware that our case is not an isolated one and that there are many carers with loved ones who are in desperate need of assistance right now. The Research Analysis provides evidence that suitable supported accommodation is not available in the area (Section 9).

Another area of concern is Respite Care for people with an intellectual disability. As more ageing carers are supporting loved ones in their homes on a full time basis, the need for a suitable place for Respite Care is all the more urgent. When we enquired about Respite Care we were told we would have to book twelve months in advance! This is most unsuitable as most instances of need occur at the last minute or with very short notice.

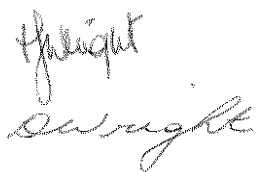
As our daughter has a Mild intellectual disability we find that access to funding is very limited. Section 7 of the Research Analysis covers this point very well and expresses situations we have experienced. Even though her disability is Mild, she is unable to fend for herself and could not live independently without support and guidance for her everyday requirements.

We agree wholeheartedly with the Summary of the Research Analysis which states the following needs:

- Support and provision of safe and secure accommodation with easy access to community services and transport.
- Facilities with adequately trained staff with 24 hour support and provision also for people who need care for shorter periods of time.
- There is an urgent need for purpose-build disability systems of accommodation, perhaps similar to that within the aged care sector.
- More in-home support is needed for those that want to stay at home (e.g. hand rails, ramps).
- Respite care must be provided at a level that is readily accessible and affordable for carers.

We thank you for taking the time to read our submission and trust that all the information will be taken into account when looking for a successful outcome to your inquiry.

Yours sincerely

The image shows two handwritten signatures in cursive. The first signature is 'Tom Wright' and the second is 'Denise Wright'. They are written in dark ink on a white background.

Tom & Denise Wright