

Fear Demeters,

My interest and concern is for the provision of accommodation for people with an intellectual disability in our region (Darling Downs, Qld) in particular, the Toowoomba area.

I am not alone in being a full time carer for my 50 year old daughter - I am 80 - I fear for her future, as I am at the stage where I need a carer myself. Both she and I ask "What will become of her when I'm gone?" Her father died when she was 3, so I reared her and her 3 sisters on my own. I have been a member of the sub-normal Assn. (later known as Endeavour Foundation) since I moved to Toowoomba when she was 6, so she could attend Hamewith Training Centre, then later a centre at Towers Hills in Brisbane. Her physical health (like many of her friends) has never been good. She has undergone 7 big operations for bowel problems and hernias, and has just been told by the orthopedic specialist, she will need a hip replacement operation in the near future. Can I leave all of these responsibilities to my other daughters when they all have their own worries? I know they would all keep in touch and help where they could, but should they have to? I feel they should be able to rely on some form of help with her accommodation in the future. Because we have cared full time for our intellectually handicapped children (now adults), we seem to be taken for granted, recently being granted \$94.70 per fortnight - carer's allowance - which does little to ease our worries for the future.

I also have 2 step children who are legally blind as well as intellectually handicapped. They live with their mother who is almost 80, and does not keep well, having had polio as a child. Her fears are the same as mine - "Where will our children go? Who will care for them?" when we are gone.

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As a member of the Ipswich Intellectual Disability Support Assn. Inc., I know there are many other parents and carers in the same situation as me, so I ask you all "If you were us and these were your children, what would you work and pray for?" I feel sure your answer would be the same as ours - "Accommodation and suitable carers for our needy children".

I realize the type of housing would need much thought and planning because, as I've pointed out, these people often have more than 1 disability, so what suits one, may not suit another. The carers, too, would need to be special people, not just someone who can cook a meal and make a bed. Our children are sensitive, compassionate people, who sense other people's feelings and reactions to them. All this must be taken into consideration.

However, before any of this can happen, we need finance - funding to be made available to any group working towards the provision of housing for our disabled children, so that is why we approach you, the Senate Committee, to beg you to act on our behalf. We need to have some surety that someone will care and carry on after us. Time is fast running out for my age group, but anything we fight for and achieve now, will benefit other parents in the future.

Please consider our plight and do what you can to help us.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Florence Hart (Mrs.)

