

19th November 2008

Finance and Public Administration Committee Inquiry
into aged and community care



*Caring for senior members
of our society*

I am the Business Manager of a rural 60 bed low care facility which has a history of caring for the elderly of the region, for over 50 years. I have only been working in the aged care industry for just under two years but have extensive accounting experience (twenty years +) in a variety of industries including chartered accounting, government, financial services, entertainment and hospitality.

Never in my past experience have I been involved in an industry that I have observed moving so rapidly to a crisis situation.

Our facility like many others runs at an operational loss despite continually cutting costs, going without everything other than essentials and a dedicated group of fundraisers. This situation is unsustainable and I doubt our facility will be viable long term with current funding arrangements. This would be devastating to our community. Many families would be forced to place their elderly relatives in facilities that are, at least an hours drive away resulting in limited visiting and causing appointment transportation difficulties for the residents.

Attracting and retaining nursing staff is almost impossible. The committed nursing staff we have are so stressed by their workload and increasingly complex needs of the residents, that most are likely to move to the public system where they can receive better pay and conditions. Similarly our personal care workers that are paid less than \$20 per hour and have an ever increasing workload due to cost cutting are coming to the conclusion that they would be better off working in retail or hospitality.

While we try to remain positive particularly for the residents and families, it is becoming more difficult each day. How is the industry going to cope with the predicted increase in the aged population? I expect over the next two to five years, many facilities will close and drastic measures will need to occur to save the industry. I hope that your inquiry will come to the same conclusion and put measures in place to prevent the collapse of the aged care industry before our much loved aged persons are personally affected.

Yours sincerely

Camille Tynan B.Comm.
Business Manager

Ray M Begg Homes Inc.