

# SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS DISABILITY SUPPORT GROUP INC.

Clo Frances Hewett Community Centre, 2 Roberts Street, Hamilton, Vic, 3300  
A0032882a

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9 October 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

I write to draw your attention to the long term accommodation crisis for people with a disability in South West Victoria.

There are no Community Residential Unit (CRU) vacancies in the Hamilton area. As a support group representing people with disabilities and their carers this situation is of great concern to us: it causes much anxiety for some people who want the best outcome for their child's future security.

In many instances it is in the best interests of the disabled person to be cared for in a residence that is not their family home; eg, where an ageing or widowed parent struggles to physically cope or where the needs of the disabled person cannot be adequately met within the existing family structure, for various reasons, however much they try.

Caring for someone with a disability is a 24 hour per day responsibility and on evenings and weekends when day services are not available, the constant supervision and physical exertion required can leave carers without the time or energy to develop essential family and community relationships. Most parents are full time carers and many are ageing and struggling to support their sons and daughters who have high support needs. They are exhausted emotionally, physically and financially and will require permanent accommodation for their child, now or in the near future.

Parents facing the desperate plight to meet the physical and emotional needs of their disabled child often have difficulty expressing their needs to governments or appropriate departments. Facing the probability that no permanent ongoing accommodation is, or will be available is adding to the pressure of an uncertain future.

Younger parents battle to keep their families and marriages together, protect siblings from neglect and discrimination and run a 'normal' life. With the responsibility of full time care of their disabled adult son or daughter, they have little time to focus on their other children or have time to themselves.

Mulleraterong Centre, the local adult disability services and support organisation, has approximately 60 adults (18 years and over) registered in day placements and estimates that as many as 20 people attending the Centre require ongoing supported accommodation immediately or in the near future.

With regard to the physically disabled, there are insufficient places outside nursing homes for younger people and those with very specific high needs, eg. Quadriplegia.

We urge you to use the funding allocations in current budgets to address this issue as soon as possible to create better outcomes for people with a disability and their families.

Yours faithfully

Mary Bone  
On behalf of the Southern Grampians Disability Support Group  
Hamilton.