

30th September 2008



Family and Community Development Committee
Inquiry into Supported Accommodation for those
with Disability and Mental Illness
Parliament House, Spring St,
East Melbourne, VIC 3002

Dear Sir/Madam,

As the parent of an adult son who is on the waiting list for shared supported accommodation, 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.

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 Hamilton adult disability day program agency, 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.

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.

Signed

M Margaret Stronach
aged 69 years.

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