

76. Frank + Anita Lynch

Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Provision of Supported Accommodation for Victorians with a Disability or Mental Illness.

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Please find our submission on **Supported Accommodation.**

Background: We are parents in our mid sixties of Miranda our daughter, who is severely disabled with quadriplegic cerebral palsy and totally dependent on us for all her needs.

1 The standard range and adequacy of accommodation.

As we have been awaiting desperately for accommodation for many years the adequacy and range is irrelevant to us as we have not had access to **any accommodation.**

2 Description of current supported accommodation

As above.

3 The Government's response and methods for measuring unmet needs.

The measuring method employed at the moment is a demeaning priority list using the criteria of homelessness, abuse, breakdown in physical and mental health and marital relationship of parents. Response at present is crisis based with no regard to prevention of these situations. **Infact the way it is managed forces families into the situation of complying with the above criteria.**

Regard should be taken of the age of the carers who have been struggling to cope with caring for many years. Retirement age of 60 to 65, would also be a good time to hand over day to day care of their adult disabled son or daughter.

Parents in their sixties should be able to **plan ahead** and not have the continual worry of what will happen to their child when they die or are incapacitated.

The quality of our society can be measured by the way it cares for its most vulnerable citizens.

4 Lack of accommodation and its impact on families.

The demeaning criteria as set out by DHS could be self fulfilling. The end result may even be worse and result in suicide and even murder.

It should be noted there is no alternative accommodation available when there is an emergency!

5 Estimate of future supported accommodation needs.

There needs to be a massive injection of funds to meet the backlog and ever increasing demand for supported accommodation. This has been scandalously neglected to date. To our knowledge there have been no new beds created in the past five years. At present to get supported accommodation someone has to die, hence the reference in parlance to the **death list**.

6. Appropriateness of care and accommodation.

It is a disgusting and shameful situation that young disabled persons are placed in nursing homes to watch the elderly die. Respite houses are also most inappropriate as permanent accommodation.

7 Accommodation for specific groups.

We are not qualified to respond to this question.

8 Alternate approaches addressing unmet needs in supported accommodation.

The economics of a cluster of group homes (as available in the UK) could enable families and community organizations such as Rotary to contribute funds to establish quality accommodation and amenities.

Many parents would agree to the provision of a lump sum to go towards the setting up of a group house and if required pay a yearly contribution toward the care of their off spring.

Any mention of parents making contributions in the past has been fobbed off as queue jumping and unfair. We believe that it would be good planning and would help those less fortunate, in fact the whole community would benefit.

With a service club involved as a type of sponsor, funds could be raised towards maintenance or a required amenity. There must be variety in types of accommodation, as there are different needs required by different people. Cluster group homes along the lines of a small retirement village for the elderly, could have some communal facilities such as a large room for meetings or parties etc. In an ideal situation, such features as a hydro therapy pool could be shared among the residents and the community. We must get rid of the so called professional's idea of what constitutes an institution. What we are about is quality of care and choice.

In conclusion we emphasise that there is an urgent need for the provision of supported accommodation for a large number of disabled adults in our country. Where possible, parents can contribute funds toward the provision of quality accommodation for their son or daughter. We would appreciate being involved and consulted in the provision of supported accommodation.

We are most interested to hear the outcomes of this Inquiry and expect to be informed of the results.

Yours faithfully,

Frank and Anita Lynch

