

**TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

---

**FAMILY AND COMMUNITY**

**DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**MR J. PERERA MLA, Chair**  
**MR J. SCHEFFER MLA, Member**  
**MRS J. POWELL MLA, Member**  
**MS M. WOOLDRIDGE MLA, Member**  
**MR B. FINN MLA, Member**

**INQUIRY INTO SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION  
FOR VICTORIANS WITH A DISABILITY OR  
MENTAL ILLNESS**

**WITNESS:**

**Nancy Hotchin - Carer**

**BALLARAT  
THURSDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2008**

MS HOTCHIN: Yes. I'm Nancy Hotchin and I live in Ballarat, and I'm a carer – no, I'm a past convener of the Schizophrenia Self-Help Group in Ballarat, which was a small group, and I started that in – well, I didn't start it. I joined that in 1982, and my real presentation is about the need for accommodation that is very well supported and structured around the care of severely mentally ill persons, and I see I've got Mary Wooldridge's card, and she's the shadow minister for mental health, and I am retired from any sort of involvement, involved in this, but I listen to many things on Radio National in whatever area of, you know, health and whatever, and social issues, and I go to specific things that I might see, lectures and things like that, regarding some of the social, psychological, health areas in mental health.

Recently, I went to an annual speech by a person from America who talked about HomeFirst, and HomeFirst is what the American group runs to house people with severely mental – severely affected by mental illness, and he was trying to present that to us in that lecture. And the Schizophrenia Fellowship, historically, had supported accommodation facility in Melbourne. Had – I see Mary comes from Doncaster and the eastern area mental health support group was there, and I'm not sure whether it still goes on, but it certainly was in the 80s and the 90s, and they did a lot to try and do the supportive thing, but the one that the fellowship ran in similar vein to what the Richmond fellowship had.

Now, the Mental Illness Foundation doesn't do that, so everybody is trying to support people, but they haven't got that physical facility to have people cared for with, you know, people who are trained in psychiatric care and that sort of thing, and I think that is a fundamental thing for people with severe illness. Now, the premise is that you will treat people and – with ongoing medications, that will happen, but I'm still questioning that there are intractable facets of illness that doesn't allow that for a percentage of population, and I think we need very good supported clinical care of people.

So that's my statement about it, and I wonder if governments are ever going to do anything along that line. We've closed our supported accommodation, and when I was training as a general nurse at 1955, had 1000 patients. And the population wasn't very big. Now, we haven't got anything with 1000 populations or anything to be well supported. So, that's me. Do you want to ask me anything or - is that all that needs to say?

THE CHAIR: Yes. Thank you very much.