

**FAMILY AND COMMUNITY**

**DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

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

**Ms H. Canning**  
**DAWN**

**MORWELL**

**THURSDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2008**

THE CHAIR: Can you please wait until the workshop starts because you will be given an opportunity during the work shop session to raise your views. I think at this stage I will get on to the next person which is Mary Kooloos.

MS POWELL: That's Heather.

THE CHAIR: That's Heather, is it?

MS CANNING: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Okay. I call upon Heather to make a verbal presentation followed by the questions.

MS CANNING: Thank you. I am Heather Canning who is speaking as a parent and carer representing DAWN, which is our Disability Accommodation Within Neighbourhoods which exists in the South Gippsland Shire. We are a partnership with people with disabilities, parents and carers with people with disabilities, Yooralla, DHS at the South Gippsland Shire, Office of Housing, Australian Home Parent, E.W. Tipping. In that partnership DAWN exists as a DHS innovation grant which we have a project worker and we would just like to have some outcomes. We had some surveys undertaken by DAWN which indicate people with a disability, on the surveys that came back to us they wanted to live with their friends or on their own. There was a need there for a range of accommodation options. Independent living of course with support in community settings. All of this is with support but people living on their own, perhaps in one-bedroom units, people living with friends in two-bedroom units, people with a disability also living in cluster neighbourhood arrangements with care available if needed, and the need, of course, with 24 hour care for high needs if with a disability.

The needs – and also there was a need there for appropriately trained staff to provide support and care, staff to be based and be a part of local community particular when in crisis or out of hour needs the support is required. We would like staff to be resourced, supported and paid appropriately to assist the continuity and retention of staff within that sector. We would also like to address the need of people who come from out of home care, example foster care service, who do not have the families to provide support when people with disabilities are living independently.

A lot of the time – I'm a parent – we are there to offer that additional support that may not be there with the actual service providers. A lot of young people in particular who are living independently, perhaps have come from a foster care background, do not have that same support and it is very, very difficult and there also needs to be a transitional training unit options to support skills development of people choosing to live in the wider community. Such units should be part of multi-use or multi-purpose local facilities used by the broader community.

So again, a lot of people perhaps are living at home obviously with their parents and carers and for them to be able to make that transition out into independent living, there definitely needs to be a transitional unit where they can experience what it's like to live independently before they actually do fly and accommodation needs to be provided and located to ensure meaningful engagement in work and/or community

activities. So accommodation is not in isolation to the life of their living and needs to be meaningful work that they are participating in, community activities, friends, everything that we would like when we are living in the community. Thank you.