Introduction
The Family and Community Development Committee is undertaking an inquiry into supported accommodation for Victorians with a disability and/or mental illness. The Committee received references from both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council on this topic. While there are some differences in the Terms of Reference there are many similarities and the committee has elected to conduct the inquiries concurrently. Both Terms of Reference are attached, and each should be read to understand the full scope of this inquiry.

We are looking into issues, such as the standard, range and adequacy of care and accommodation currently available, the appropriateness of the current service providers, how unmet need is managed in Victoria, accessibility and appropriateness of accommodation for rural communities, ethnically diverse communities, indigenous Victorians, and the impact of the current service provision on families and carers.

Context
Supported accommodation models and services have changed considerably over the years. Initially people with a disability or mental illness were institutionalised. The first major changes to this model took place during the 1960s to 1980s when deinstitutionalisation and mainstreaming reforms occurred. By the mid 1990s to 2000, the Victorian Government decommissioned the remaining psychiatric institutions and the majority of the institutions for people with a disability and replaced these services with mainstream health services. With the closure of institutions, new area-based disability and mental health services, providing local inpatient, residential and community-based care, were introduced. Current Government policy is directed towards placing people with a disability and/or mental illness into supported accommodation services in communities or providing packages of in-home support.
Objective
The objective of the inquiry is to examine the current provision of supported accommodation and consider recommending changes for individuals with a disability and/or mental illness, their families and carers. In order to do this, we would like to hear from individuals, families and community groups about their experiences of and views about the current provision of supported accommodation in Victoria. Suggestions about how to improve the provision of care and accommodation and alternate approaches are welcome.

Definitions:
Supported Accommodation: The Committee realises that there are many different definitions of supported accommodation and these may vary from person to person, organisation to organisation. As our inquiry is looking at a broad range of accommodation services, for this purpose, we include government and non-government provided accommodation:

Supported accommodation for people with disabilities includes: community residential units, congregate care, independent units and residential institutions

Supported accommodation for people with a mental illness includes: community care units, secure extended care units, prevention and care facilities, residential rehabilitation and supported accommodation.

Disability: a sensory, physical or neurological impairment or acquired brain injury, an intellectual disability or developmental delay. (Definition fully laid out in Section 3 of the Disability Act 2006)

Mental Illness: a medical condition that is characterised by a significant disturbance of thought, mood, perception or memory. (Definition fully laid out in Section 8 1A of the Mental Health Act 1986)

Questions
The following are some questions which may provide a guide to you in framing your submission to the Committee:

1. What have been your experiences with supported accommodation in Victoria with regard to availability, suitability, and adequacy of care for people with a mental illness or disability?

2. What is your experience of trying to access supported accommodation in terms of information, planning and decision making?
3. What other approaches/models should be considered to address supported accommodation funding, planning and delivery?

4. What are the implications for individuals who need but cannot get supported accommodation? Is the alternate accommodation that is available adequate and care appropriate?

5. What is your view on the provision of accommodation and care in private, government and community sector managed supported accommodation?

6. What are the positives and/or negatives of the current approach to provision of supported accommodation on families and carers?

7. What issues need to be considered in the accessibility and provision of supported accommodation for people from:
   - Rural and regional Victoria
   - Culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
   - Indigenous Victorians

8. What other issues do you think need to be considered which have not been addressed by the above questions?

**Process**

If you would like to tell us about your experiences and ideas about supported accommodation, there are a number of ways you can do this.

**Submissions**

The Committee encourages individuals and groups to make a written submission about the subject of the inquiry. These submissions are regarded as important contributions to the inquiry. There is no specific method for organising or presenting a submission. Your contribution can take the form of a letter, a short summary paper or a longer research document. Your submission may contain factual information, opinion or both and you may wish to draw the attention of the Committee to something relevant to the inquiry. Submissions should be received by **10th October**. If you require further time please contact the Secretariat.

**Public hearings**

A public hearing is an opportunity for a parliamentary committee to take verbal evidence from people and organisations with particular knowledge about an inquiry. All hearings are conducted in accordance with parliamentary rules and procedure. As a witness, you will be invited to present evidence and information to
members of the parliamentary committee. Members of the committee may then ask you a series of questions relating to your evidence, to explore that information in more detail. There will be a public gallery, where members of the public can observe proceedings. Public hearings will be held in Metropolitan Melbourne and Country Victoria between September and November 2008. Dates will be published on the website prior to that time.

Role of Secretariat
Under the Parliamentary Committees Act 2003 the Family and Community Development Committee has wide powers to review, consider and conduct investigations and report to the Parliament on matters associated with the family or the welfare of the family, as well as a range of social issues. This includes examining matters dealing with community development or the welfare of the community, in addition to the role of government in community development and welfare of the family.

If you need more information regarding the inquiry into supported accommodation, you can contact the committee secretariat.

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