
From: Inquiry into Abuse in Disability Services POV eSubmission Form
<cso@parliament.vic.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 21 April 2016 1:03 PM
To: FCDC
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Services for People with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Services for People with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Ms Shannon Leahy
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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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I have fought for the last 12 years to be pro active in supporting my 3 sons development, socially, emotionally and academically as they struggle daily dealing with the impact ASD, combined with other diagnosis - epilepsy, psychosis unspecified, cognitive processing, learning disabilities, have on their academic focus and social interactions. We were lucky to have the eldest go through ECIS but the available time for therapies were once a fortnight if we were lucky. The cost and time of travelling to find private services was a strain on my boys and myself - leading to massive meltdowns and anti depressants for myself. 2012-13 was a horrendous year for our family with the arrival of psychosis (he regressed back to a toddler) this instability in our divorced home contributed to the mental breakdown of my other 2 boys. We were and still remain a family in crisis with my energy taken up with trying to rundown leads on funding that will support us as a family - as a single parent carer my ability to financially support my children's extra needs as well as encourage social interaction with their limited community is a juggling act that stretches us to the breaking point. I have limited support from my ex who refuses to believe the professional diagnoses - I battle everyday to overcome roadblocks and fear to build a solid foundation for my boys to step into the world and contribute. They are funny, shy, cheeky, stubborn, talented and smart but everyday they face a word of tests and ignorance that highlights their differences and makes them feel small. We try every avenue/therapy/program offered by professionals but often the wait means the effectiveness is decreased. I'm often told not to think too far ahead but if I don't plan for alternative futures - independent living, work success- then who will? Education and its restrictions with necessary social connections and school controlled funding leaves parents and students out in the cold with no life skills offered and isolated play without planning - teachers are given very little daily support. High school is a nightmare with teacher changes and work load - modified is bandied about but is rarely enforced because there are too many students and teachers to truly coordinate. The reality is that my youngest will not cope with the demands of mainstream high school - he only attends 3.5 days of primary school (with most afternoon spent downtime) - so an ASD local school, with a waiting list and only 14 student places \$10,000 per year, but no school funding allowed so the burden of trying to cover cost or leaving my child in a daily hell are leading ever closer to breaking point.