

Equal and Fair Residential Charges

Community service organisations made to survive on crumbs from the Department of Human Services, whilst the Department squanders on bureaucratic blundering and serious mismanagement!

Most supported accommodation group homes for people with disabilities, throughout the State of Victoria, are either DHS or CSO.

The charges for residential accommodation places are based on two costs, (a) the cost of the support service (cost of support staff) and, (b) the cost of daily living (rent, housekeeping and personal expenditure).

General members of the community living in the community on an age-pension pay the cost of their daily living (rent, housekeeping and personal expenditure). And as they are generally able to care for themselves, there is no question of support service costs, as there is for those whose disability precludes them from fully caring for themselves.

Given it is well recognised and accepted that people with disabilities must be given as much equal opportunity as possible with people in the general community, they must not be expected to pay for, or contribute towards their support costs. This would be punishing them for having a disability.

The state government has told the DHS they must cut expenditure, especially if they want to give more ISPs, given the NDIS will not start in other parts of Victoria for at least another three years.

This government department's hierarchical management being extremely reluctant to tackle the department's traditional reactive/disaster management which is totally unable to properly manage the business of providing proper and efficient services, has taken the easier option to tax its residents – people with disabilities who have so little in their lives.

As is standard bureaucratic practice, the state government is assisting its department to bring the standard of living of their residents down to that of the residents of aged-care residential facilities who are living on just an age-pension, by significantly reducing their already restricted disposable income from what is left of their DSP after paying basic living costs.

This government department has been imposing this practice on non-government (CSOs) supported accommodation group home services for many years, by not fully funding their support services. So CSOs have to charge their residents more, do fund-raising activities or provide less support staff, or a combination thereof, to make up for the shortfall in the amount of support service funding the DHS pays them in comparison with that which they pay their own direct care services.

CSOs and their peak body, the NDS, are seriously concerned the all-powerful department bureaucrats will intimidate them if they dare to question funding compatibility.

The level of support is determined for each resident in a DHS group home by a HACSU approved bench-mark. The department must, therefore, ensure sufficient funds are available to provide the necessary staff to achieve the support level. In reality, the staff level is mainly determined by staff lore, not resident needs.

This department mandate should apply equally to CSOs, with a similar level of support service funding being provided. For example, if a resident moves from a DHS group home to a CSO group home, similar support service funding should apply. Whereas, currently, it does not. The DHS provide less support service funding to CSOs, than they do to their own direct care services.

Not only must the department be discouraged from taxing its own residents with the proposed 50% increase in charges to their residents, but they must be encouraged to ensure all group homes in the state receive similar support service funding for compatible residents.

Extra 1: [Quality of Life Care not Minder Care](#) – Melbourne’s Child – July 2013.

Extra 2: [Oral Health Promotion in Day Services](#) – funded by DHS, Victoria.

Extra 3: NDIS Ready: [Capacity building for an NDIS](#) – June 2013.

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