

Abusive carers sacked

Alex White, Sunday Herald Sun – July 8, 2012

Some of the state's most vulnerable people, including children and disabled clients, have been assaulted and verbally abused by their carers in Victoria.

Last year three social workers from the Department of Human Services were caught assaulting clients, 14 investigations were launched after allegations of inappropriate behaviour and four staff were mysteriously sacked.

A further three DHS staff were stood down in March 2011 when police were called after the Ombudsman found carers had assaulted a disabled, mute man and left him with serious carpet burns.

In total, four staff were sacked over 12 months but the reasons remain a mystery. There were 69 staff from the department who were found to have committed a serious breach of conduct — up from only 19 the year before.

The incidents were uncovered by the *Sunday Herald Sun* in documents released under Freedom of Information laws.

The reports showed the number of workers punished had jumped significantly, which was the result of a new reporting system according to the State Government.

"The Victorian Government does not tolerate behaviour that jeopardises the health and safety of people in its care," a government spokesman said.

"Additional safeguards to ensure the safety of disability clients have recently been put in place, including stronger and better processes for staff to report any concerns or incidents.

"Immediate action is taken, once allegations are made, to protect clients and if appropriate, police are notified."

whitea@heraldsun.com.au

LISA Comment: The incidents which attract the media bright-lights, are just the tip of the iceberg. Most incidents are covered-up by the reactive service provider management, especially DHS Victoria, having the luxury of a captive market where the centre of service provision is far from the consumer – those with a disability and their families.

LIFESTYLE IN SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION (LISA) INC.

Tel: 03-9434-3810: Email: info@lisainc.com.au or vk3qq@optusnet.com.au

Web: www.lisainc.com.au : www.lisa-aus.blogspot.com

NOTE: We are always interested in feedback and information; general, specific, good or bad.

If you wish anonymously: Our mail address is, 73 Nepean Street, Watsonia, 3087 _