

Carers plan to build protection for disabled

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By Terri Rew

A Mornington Peninsula carer's group wants to stop unscrupulous landlords preying on people with intellectual disabilities.

Community Lifestyle Accommodation is appealing for donations of land or money to build accommodation for adults with disabilities.

CLA chairman Paul Lyons said housing was desperately needed for carers and families who were missing out on support and services.

Dedicated carers with varying skills, knowledge and expertise in CLA say they are committed to tackling the critical lack of suitable accommodation, combined with the changing needs of adults with intellectual and physical disabilities.

The not-for-profit, CLA, wants individuals, businesses, private organisations and government organisations to donate land and cash for a new building on the peninsula.

In a two-part submission in response to the February 2011 Disability Care and Support Productivity Commission's draft report, CLA said many people with intellectual disabilities were living in poverty in boarding houses where they were vulnerable to exploitation by landlords and abuse by other residents.

The CLA submission stated: "They have no one to monitor their medications or medical appointments and are surrounded by co-residents - typically people with serious mental health issues and drug and alcohol abuse.

CLA is concerned for elderly carers with adult children suffering with physical or intellectual disabilities ... If the parent is incapacitated in any way and can no longer care for their child, the concern is many are vulnerable to financial, physical and sexual abuse and do not have the skills to manage

abusive situations. In fact, it is highly likely that they would not recognise the dangers or realise what is happening is indeed, abuse.

“This is an extremely urgent issue to address”, said CLA secretary, Marie Hell, who is a carer of her adult son.

Mr Lyons and board member Jenny Hopmans told The News they were concerned at the lack of support for carers as well as inadequate aid for people with disabilities aged over 18.

Many caring families were missing out on support and services that were desperately needed for them to enjoy “a simple life, as others do in our community”.

According to the Productivity Commission’s draft report “the disability support system is inequitable, under-funded, fragmented, inefficient and gives people with disabilities little choice”

Mr Lyons said CLA believed people with an intellectual or physical disabilities deserve entitlements, not charity hand-outs.

The CLA agreed with the commission’s recommendations that the Australian, state and territory governments form a task force to implement the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the reporting structure to the Council of Australian Governments and Heads of Treasury meetings.

"People have to act now. There are ageing parents caring for their intellectual or physical impaired adult child with hardly any support. Who will care for their children when they are dead?" Mr Lyons asked.

He said CLA was committed to providing a flexible, individual service model that would enable adults with an intellectual disability to live independently of their carers.

Anyone wanting to help Community Lifestyle Accommodation can call Marie Hell on 03-5983-8785, or visit:

www.communitylifestyleaccommodation.org.au