

“Who corrects the actions of government departments, if not the government?”

It is the role of government to fund the provision of social services to the public. Government uses public money, the result of taxes and charges, to do this. It must, therefore, be the role of government to regulate the provision of social services.

The organisation funded by the State Government of Victoria to provide and to arrange the provision of social services across Victoria, is the Department of Human Services (“DHS”), Victoria. The regulation of this organisation, this government department, must, therefore, be the responsibility of the State Government of Victoria.

One of the social service roles of DHS Victoria, is to arrange the provision of support services for people with a disability, through its ‘Disability Services’.

As part of the state government’s responsibility to regulate DHS Victoria, it established, under the Disability Act 2006, the Office of the Disability Services Commissioner.

The Disability Services Commissioner is, (a) not empowered to direct service providers (including DHS Victoria) and , (b) not empowered to consider systemic complaints (complaints about that which causes individual complaints to arise) – system failures. The Commissioner is empowered only to conciliate individual complaints.

This leaves the only body with the right to directly investigate the systemic aspect of consumer complaints against DHS Victoria, and to subsequently direct DHS Victoria to correct its system failures, as the State Government of Victoria.

It is, therefore, the responsibility of the Minister for Community Services to direct DHS Victoria to correct its system failures. If necessary, through the Minister engaging and empowering external expertise to ensure this occurs.

We suspect this failure of governments to act in the interest of consumers and tax payers, is very wide spread. We certainly saw it with the, ‘Victoria Police Service Areas’. Their management failed to ensure public service staff provided sufficient equipment to ensure police vehicles were on the road, and had to, therefore, outsource the work – government paid twice for the work to keep police vehicles on the road.

Whereas, where vulnerable people are provided with insufficient or inappropriate care, the work is not outsourced, so these vulnerable people suffer directly!

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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