



Lifestyle in Supported Accommodation (LISA) Inc.

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Quality of Life Care and Support : Not aged-care for people with disabilities living in supported accommodation group homes throughout Victoria

The vast majority of people living in group homes have an intellectual or multiple disability. They range from young to middle aged adults. Their life is, and always will be but a tiny fraction of that of the general population who have a regular level of intellectual capacity.

Supported accommodation group home living for our citizens with limited intellectual capacity came into being mainly as a result of the closure of institutions.

Around half of these group homes throughout the state are run by non-government (NGO/CSO) service providers, and half directly by the state government. One of the main differences between the two; NGOs receive far less service and support funding from the state government, than do the government's direct care services – the Department of Human Services (DHS). Frequently, therefore, NGOs have to charge their residents more, or provide less support staff.

The people living in institutions were, for years, not expected to pay any aspect of their care and support. In the main, it was not until they were moved into group homes in the community, that they were expected to pay the three components of their daily living – rent, housekeeping (inc. utilities) and personal expenditure (inc. clothing, medication, day service admin and program costs, etc, etc). They pay their way!

At no time were they expected to pay for, or contribute towards the cost of support staff (wages and overheads) in either day services (\$25,000pa) or group homes (\$128,000pa). As to do so, would be punishment for being unable to care for and support themselves.

The original intention of the NDIS was similar. People would be assessed as to their needs to have quality of life care and support to the extent of their intellectual capacity, needs, desires and their disability support pension after paying their daily living costs. Their assessed support costs being fully funded by the NDIS.

Whereas, we are now seeing a state government moving away from the quality of life focus of its extensive and comprehensive care policies, standards and values for the care and support of people severely disadvantaged by their disabilities, towards an aged-care, confinement existence which people experienced in many of the institutions, through a grab for cash from our most vulnerable citizens by a government failing to rein-in its bloated, poorly managed, wasteful and under-performing service provider - the Department of Human Services.

Residents of DHS group homes and their stakeholders should, (a) not consider the state government's offer to consider personal hardship, as this is an insult to the well-recognised entitlement of people with disabilities to other than a charity based quality of life and, (b) not allow this generic problem to be broken-down to personal issues and needs, as this will fragment the group home community.

The objective of LISA Inc is to empower and support families with a member with an intellectual or multiple disability who is living in supported accommodation to better understand service provision procedures, care policies, standards and values, and thereby be better positioned to scrutinise service providers. And, to lobby service providers for consistent and meaningful provision of quality of life care.