

## **Raising Your Voices : Showing Your Displeasure**

*B&L action by the DHS is the thin end of the wedge!*

The next VCAT hearing in relation to the DHS fee hike is scheduled for Wednesday 28 August 2013, at 9:30am. We are advised by VCAT, this hearing will now be at the William Cooper Justice Centre,, Level 2, Court Room 1, 223 William Street, Melbourne.

This hearing is specifically in relation to the Tribunal having the jurisdiction to hear the case for and against the fee hike. No evidence will be considered at this time about the actual cost increase. The hearing will almost certainly be very legal, boring and frustrating for those who want to cut to the chase of the matter itself.

The DHS is so determined to raise revenue from their residents on the DSP, to help fund other services, they are using their most heavy legal artillery in an attempt to block the Tribunal from hearing the case of the totally unjustified and outrageous cost increase on the residents of the department's group homes.

The Tribunal have allowed two days to hear the extremely legal arguments for and against the Tribunal hearing the actual matter. Those mad about the audacity of the DHS will have to remain so for a little longer, to allow legal process to hopefully allow the Tribunal to hear the matter as it should in a fair and democratic society.

In contrast, the actions the DHS in its attempt to block a reasonable appeal against their proposed despotic actions, reinforces just how arrogant this state government department is towards those it is intended to serve.

With department house staff and their union very much against the shocking and totally unjustified cost increase, families should feel assured direct care staff will continue to support their family member within the current CERS fees, as they have for so many years.

We will most certainly not be paying this totally unjustified and outrageous cost increase whilst the matter is in contention. Anyone who considers paying should be aware, (a) attempting to claim hardship subjects the person on the DSP to a means test, (b) the potential to have real residential tenancy rights is lost forever, (c) a fixed-fee residential charge means the group home is a hostel (aged-care style) not a home and, (d) the DHS fixed-fee residential charge and cost hike sets a precedent for NDIS not to fully fund the residents of group homes for their support services (staff wages and associated overheads).

The bureaucrats see this as a test case. If they win this, a precedent will be set to cost cut on all other services for people with disabilities. There are many hands in the government revenue jar - disability is always one of the lowest priorities.

Everyone is encouraged to raise their voices and actions against the state government and their department's shocking spin against our very vulnerable people, most of whom have never had, and will never have an income other than their *Disability Support Pension*. Register your concerns / objections with VALID and Villamanta.

**Extra 1:** [VALID Petition against the fee hike](#) – Petition closing **18 September 201**

**Extra 2:** [Fee Hike Instruction - Example](#)

**Extra 3:** We are having a play-on-words with DCA over existing group home residents eventually moving from their current state support service block funding to NDIS ISP funding of their support service costs to continue to live in their current group homes.

**Extra 4:** [LISA's General Comment Forum Page](#) – Our website is limited in not having a full forum, so we are evaluating a forum type page for exchange of comment and ideas.

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