

Residents of group homes now have less choice and control

“Bureaucratic restrictive practices against vulnerable people”

Choice and control for residents of supported accommodation group homes throughout Victoria is being further restricted by the state government about to make all group homes ‘one-fee, aged care residential’ - hostel style living.

This is in addition to the residents being seriously restricted in being denied residential tenancy rights under the Residential Tenancies Act, and by being denied control of their support service funding (changed from ‘block’ to ‘ISP’ funding). Whereas, their only expectation of society is for reasonable human rights - like most in the general community.

Those being provided with ISPs (Individual support packages), to live within the SDA (Self Directed Approaches) concept, are actively encouraged to ensure they have ‘Choice and Control’ in all aspects of their lives. Thus, they have control of their support service funding, the ability and right to choose their support staff, and the right of residential tenancy rights – control of their front door.

In total contrast, the residents of group homes are specifically denied residential tenancy rights under section 23c of the Residential Tenancies Act, and section 56(2) of the Disability Act 2006. They are further restricted from residential tenancy rights by the state government’s intended removal of the ‘rent’ component of the residential charge.

Control of one’s front door, through property ownership or residential tenancy rights when renting, is vital in having ‘choice and control’.

The control of their support service funding is a vital factor for the residents of group homes to have choice and control - together with residential tenancy rights, choice of their service provider, choice of their support staff and right to develop their service contract. With an individual resident then having the financial ability to move to another service provider.

The general community uses their common law rights and their residential tenancy rights to control their front door. When using local government HACC services, support staff can be chosen. This is in total contrast to group homes, where the residents mostly have little or no control or say over who provides their personal care and support.

Even Community Visitors from the Office of the Public Advocate can do little in respect to resident complaints about support staff. And, this is not counting those residents with little or no ability to communicate their concerns effectively, and have no family or stakeholder to represent them.

Bureaucratic restrictive practices against vulnerable people and their families is turning the clock back towards the worst of institutional minder care and their awesome power over vulnerable people.

As Community Visitors in the 1980s, we witnessed, during the practical aspect of the excellent training course, the most horrific conditions being endured by the residents of a very large institution. We considered ourselves extremely fortunate not to be assigned to the said institution on graduation.

It was very gratifying to us that such an institution was soon closed, as the service level and quality problems would have been a nightmare for assigned Community Visitors.

Extra 1: [NDIS White-Anted by States](#) re National Disability Standards

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