



PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

Family and Community Development Committee

My submission to stage 2 of the hearings into the abuse of people with disabilities is focused on Housing provided by The Department of Human Services and managed by The Director of Housing [REDACTED]. I have read the terms of reference and believe that my submission fits the criteria.

Myself: I am a 60 year old disabled pensioner and have been living in a purpose built accommodation block provided by the Department of Human Services. I have been residing there for eleven years.

Property Description: The property consists of a small unit block with 29 flats on three levels. This accommodation facility was purpose built to house persons with disabilities such as physical, mental illness and acquired brain injury and the effects of long term substance etc. It has flats floors for wheel chair access, a lift to assist those who cannot use the stairs and large doors with two handles for ease of removal in times of emergency and a fire suppression system.

The property is managed by the property managers based at the Office of Housing [REDACTED] and their role is maintenance and they also have authority to collect rent from Centerlink.

Incidents of abuse: There are many incidents of abuse of disabled persons/pensioners and I would like to bring two to the attention of the Committee.

Firstly, the **theft** of my pension. Management accessed my Centlelink account for no reason whatsoever other than they wanted to which left myself short of funds for food and medication. After a lengthy investigation my money was returned but not before every bureaucratic barrier was put in my way by the management. It took a Ministerial intervention to settle what became a dispute and the process of disputed resolution was nothing more than an attempt by management to take advantage of the disadvantaged. This abuse is systematic and is ongoing.

Secondly, This is a maintenance issue which not so quickly turned into a most savage and nasty act of abuse of a disabled person which lead the Judiciary to make a comment on the

performance of the management at the Office of Housing [REDACTED] and I quote " **The worst landlord in Victoria**"

Listen to this one, here we go. Sewerage from the upstairs flat was entering my apartment through the ceiling for a period of four and a half years. Many attempts to rectify the sewage leak failed due to incompetence of the management of the Office of Housing.

An application was made to VCAT to have the repairs completed and it took **eleven** appearances to solve the problem. the Director of Housing was in breach of The Residential Tenancy Act for 1353 days. During this process the then Minister and the directors and the regional manager became involved and it is at this time that management changed their strategy for defence from the poor workmanship of the maintenance crews to the tenant which is myself. The property manager of the day declared publicly, in court, without evidence that it was I who created the sewage leak which is psychically impossible.

This behaviour by the manager is nothing more than abuse in the extreme. It has created psychological damage which is one of the cruellest forms of abuse for a disabled person. Once again it is an example of an attempt to take advantage of the disadvantaged.

Recommendation: That the terms of reference be widened to include disabled person who are living in accommodation provided by the Department of Human Services.

I would like to tell my story to the Committee and produce all the supporting documents.

Please Keep my identity confidential at this stage.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]