

Submission into the Parliamentary inquiry into Disability Abuse:-

I am making this submission on behalf of my intellectually disabled sister who used to reside at Janefield which was deemed to be congregate care and closed. My sister was then moved to a Community Residential Unit (CRU) owned by the Department of Human Services (DHS). She has since come home to live with me and later died. [REDACTED]

At Janefield the ladies in my sister's unit had individual toilets. In the DHS house there were 2 bathrooms and one separate toilet. One bathroom had an open toilet in it. The separate toilet was reserved for staff and the bathroom without a toilet was also used by staff. This left the 5 ladies in the CRU, many of whom had bathroom problems, using the one bathroom with a bath a shower and vanity and toilet in the one room.

Ladies would be on the toilet while another was in the shower and another was having their teeth brushed. One lady got up at night and showered making a lot of noise waking the residents. There was absolutely no privacy. The house is still there and the problems are still the same. The community visitors visit the house and it appears they have done nothing about this issue. The Office of the Public Advocate have been notified and they have done nothing either. What the OPA did was to try to stop my sister coming home to me when they knew how bad the conditions were. My sister was very private and had a dual disability in that she had a psychiatric illness as well. She had been sick at Janefield because they stopped her medication when she was put on a chemical restraint form by mistake. This happened when the DHS took over from the Health Department. Three times my sister was taken off medication and each time she became unwell mentally. She was given huge doses of shock treatment to get her better and appeared to have had a stroke as a result of the shock treatment. I had to leave work to care for her and she had a left sided neglect and I had to carefully place her food on the side of her mouth where she could still swallow. It took 6 months for her to get better and even then she was unable to follow multiple instructions as she had prior to the shock treatment. She forgot her grandmother who was her favourite person and she forgot she had a brother. She was never the same again. The OPA medical guardian allowed this and would not allow me to bring her home. This went to the AAT where I won accommodation guardianship. I was able to care for her till she got into her CRU.

But this was not the answer as she deteriorated there and had more episodes even after I had the chemical restraint stopped by the Intellectual Disability Review Panel. For the first time she became unwell on her medication. Eventually I brought her home from the CRU because it was so bad there. We were very happy together and it is a disgrace that the DHS and OPA tried to prevent my bringing her home. They have anti-family values which ruined my sister's life.

One of the things the Unit Manager did at the house was to use my sister's incontinence allowance of \$468 every 6 months to buy products for the staff and the house. My sister needed incontinence undies and pads. But they bought gloves for staff, soap on tap for staff, soap powder and oxy action soaker for the whole house with my sister's

money. I still have a copy of an order form which I have kept. This is financial abuse. This went on with the knowledge of the DHS the OPA and staff at the house.

Since my sister left the house I have discovered from a staff member that staff were eating the ladies food without paying for it. They were hiring videos with the ladies money which staff wanted to see. They took the ladies to the movies and saw films the staff wanted to see.

When the ladies moved to this house we wanted all female staff. But the DHS started to employ men at night as well and they were showering the ladies. None of these men had any qualifications. I think one was a concreter. I complained to the DHS and they wrote back saying I was not in charge of the staff rosters, they were. My sister made a complaint and when I notified the police I was told there was nothing they could do because she was not a credible witness and could not communicate effectively.

In my case I could never speak to the Unit Manager. She was never there when I wanted to speak with her and refused to meet with me. So the Unit Manager came up with a communication book for me to keep me at bay regarding complaints. I was to write in the communication book. I later discovered this book was labelled with my name and kept in my sister's medical record! All staff saw any criticism as a personal affront. Because I complained they were not nice to me and they took it out on my sister. In fact David Sykes formerly of Eastern health community Volunteers wrote a paper on CRU's where he documents this very thing. He later became the Public Advocate.

What I would like to say is that there are plenty of people supposedly there to protect people with a disability. But when it comes to protecting them they don't do anything. This is commonly known as Organizational Defensive reasoning. There is a book about this very thing. That it does not matter what you do there will be no change the bureaucrats just want to keep the status quo.

I thank you for this opportunity to make this submission and I would be happy to appear at a hearing to explain the catastrophic effect this had on my sister's life.