

*QUEENSLAND PARENTS FOR
PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY INC.*

INCLUSIVE LIVES MAILOUT

Volume 11 Issue 2

April 2009

In this mailout

**Your Inclusive Lives
newsletter**





CONTENTS

FROM ME TO YOU - FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK	3
OFFICE REPORT	6
GETTING BACK TO BASICS—ABOUT ADVOCACY	8
DISABILITY ALLIANCE – ELECTION CAMPAIGN REPORT	10
IS THIS HAPPENING TO YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER?	13
MY LIFE MY HOME MY SOLUTION	16
PROMISES, PROMISES, PROMISES	21
JUSTICE IN A HUMAN SERVICE: HOW DO WE ACHIEVE SUCH A THING?	23
QCOSS—SOCIAL POLICY AND ADVOCACY FORUMS 2009	25
DARING TO DREAM	27

FROM ME TO YOU FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dear Friends,

So much has been happening in a whirlwind of activity amongst our core group on the Board of QPPD for the past few months that I barely know where to begin.

Eric Kiernan has worked with our Board and Director like a personal trainer and we have now a very trim taut and terrific approach to governing our organisation. Our heartfelt thanks go to Eric. No more late night meetings that used to make us groan at the thought! We are now using pro formas and processes that see us completing our most heavy agendas in two hours!

Of course this has meant a need to be very organised and prepared. Board members are sent information ahead of meeting dates so that we are able to peruse the agenda items, the Director's report and raise anything for discussion should we feel the need. So far, even with debate we are able to make decisions without the need for protracted dialogue and of course, the wonder of email has made this possible.

Our Director Jan has risen to her new role with increased responsibilities more than admirably, and while the past twelve months have been an extremely steep learning curve, she has taken it all in her stride.

As mentioned, this Board agreed to undertake this process of restructure and renewal for QPPD, and was initially thought to have taken us to Christmas. It was very apparent before then, that it was most likely to extend us to March 2009. Sadly, due to huge commitments with family, work and her involvement on the Board at CRU, Anita Speed had to step down from QPPD's Board of Management in January.

I would like to thank all the members of this Transitional Board for their support especially during the many months that we met weekly to ensure the restructure process was moving ahead as quickly as possible. In particular, Carol Holt who has worked tirelessly in her many roles...Chair of The Community Safeguards Coalition, my partner in the Transition Network, Vice President of the Board, her work with Jan writing the Policy and Procedure Manual, and her work with our two Social Work Students Hugh Rose-Miller and Curt Singleton.

Now Carol and Tim Holt who expected this to be an interim Board position, are stepping out of their roles this month, and we may need to hold a Special General Meeting in order to elect a new Board of Management.

This will be most necessary as I too will be leaving at the end of May. In June, my daughter Lindsey will be turning 21, and I will be hosting a massive 21st celebration for her, as immediately after her birthday, she, her father and I will be sailing to North Queensland for about four months!

So it is an earnest request for you to step forward as soon as possible to be nominated for Board Positions. We have developed a Board Calendar of events

FROM ME TO YOU.....continued

that will assist, and have also committed that outgoing Board members will stay with the role of governance for two months to mentor and support the incoming committee.

We have developed processes and are still currently writing and refining policy in order to ensure smoother management for the office staff, and viable and efficient mechanisms for the Governance.

Much work has been undertaken to support and rebuild the strength of our organisation, to welcome and nurture our members, and to link with our allies. The Alliance for Parent Leadership with Mamre has huge potential for formalising pathways between our groups for families, and already this has seen improved flow of information. There are plans underway to host more Regional Advocacy Development activities, starting closer to Brisbane at first, and then working our way further afield.

This will be made more possible at a future date, due to our success in advocacy around our funding agreement. Earlier this year, we received confirmation that we have been liberated from the imposed commitment to the Individual Advocacy Program. This will eventually release funds for QPPD to return to our core activities, including outreaching to our membership around Queensland. However, in the meantime, we have an obligation to our Individual Advocacy Clients, and we will not abdicate our responsibilities. An exit strategy has been developed, but it will require individual responses that may require ongoing refinement.

The next few months are of vital importance to the continued development and wellbeing of QPPD. There are some exciting prospects ahead for us as inroads for relationship-building with key politicians and bureaucrats are nurtured. This will have some potential for our ongoing systemic advocacy activities.

It is **CRITICAL** that the good work and seed-sowing that has occurred over the recent past is continued, or what momentum we have begun will be lost. Our efforts with Bill Shorten in the Federal government, along with small steps that were made in the state sector and in the community in general can continue if and when we have other members to join in this work.

With this in mind I ask you to consider the following image:-



FROM ME TO YOU.....continued

The flying geese in formation are a common analogy for QPPD. It is understood that survival of the group is utterly dependant on the willingness and necessity of 'turn-taking'. Without others coming forward to perform their stint at the head of the "V" the leaders would fall to earth and perish.

Another human parallel is the manner in which cyclists perform their turn at the head of the group, to carry the group faster and to gain ground over opposition.

These are great comparisons for QPPD, for without someone to 'take turns' active members, juggling many varied roles will burn out, and the group will lose ground, fall behind or perhaps even perish.

SO PLEASE register your interest in becoming a Board member, and you will be amazed at how much you will learn, the relationships you will foster, and how much you will grow as an advocate, leader and individual.

I know that I have loved my time on the Board, but new ideas and fresh approaches are what keep any organisation relevant and responsive. It is **YOUR TURN NOW.**

**JUMP ON
BOARD AND
TAKE A TURN.**

Michelle O'Flynn
President



To register your interest on being part of the board, please write to the address on the back of this newsletter, email the office (coordinator@qppd.org) or ring the office on (07) 3875 2101 or the free call number—1800 805 184.

FROM THE OFFICE

Well the election is over and the Labor Party are back in power for another term. What does it mean? Will there be change? Will promises be kept? Or will change happen for the good of people with disabilities? Will the economic climate affect the decisions made by the Government? There are still many ineffective and outdated policies and practices in place that still need to be changed. These are just some of the questions we all want to know, but only time will tell.



Many working in the advocacy area get quite frustrated that people with disabilities are continuing to be ignored and that many of the issues are still not being dealt with appropriately by government.

In previous Staying in Touch magazines I have raised the issue of what we see as "Forced Cotenancy". The Community Safeguards Coalition believes this is a human rights issue and has prepared a position statement which is included in this newsletter. Along with the position statement is a loose leaf "Co-signatory Form". If after reading the position statement you agree that people with a disability should be given the choice of where and with whom they live then please complete the form and post or fax the form back to the QPPD office.

Education continues to be another issue for children with disability. Though the previous placement policy was scrapped we still find that children are being denied the opportunity and right to be fully included in receiving a total education; an education that prepares them for full and meaningful life after school. There is a lot of literature that has already been written stating that "inclusion" of children with disabilities in mainstream school life does work. To bring all this work together we asked an ally of QPPD (Assoc Prof Robert Jackson) to write a Literature Review. Also newly prepared is QPPD's position statement "All Children Belong Together" which has been written by one of our parents (Lynn Walmsley). Susan Booth the Queensland Antidiscrimination Commissioner will launch both these papers at an event on the 29th April 2009. The papers will be sent to every Minister for Education, and Disability Services Departments within Australia and New Zealand; the Social Inclusion board (Canberra); the Catholic Education Department; Independent Schools in Australia and New Zealand and a number of schools. If you would like a copy of these articles and or would like a copy sent to a particular person/organisation please do not hesitate to contact the QPPD office. We can email or post these documents as pdf files.

For education though the fight doesn't stop. QPPD has a group of members who have a specific interest in Education and want to continue the systemic fight. I look forward to giving you an update of their work in the future.

From the office continued....

Other work that is being prepared is regional advocacy workshops. These have not been done for a few years. The first two will be in May in Ipswich and Toowoomba with hopefully another before the end of the financial year. Our aim is to raise the awareness that advocacy can be done by parents but they need to know how to do advocacy. Another aspect of the workshops will be – “Transitioning process from school to work. What do parents and children with disabilities need to consider?” The workshops will be run by Michelle O’Flynn the current QPPD President.

With our Transition Board having finished its work a new Board needs to be voted into place. The **Special General Meeting** will be held on the 8th May at 7pm. If you are a parent or an Honorary Member you would have received extra information in this newsletter about this meeting. Please support your organisation to get a new board.

Finally I would like to remind parents who received the **Survey Form**, to complete this form and return it to the office in the stamp addressed envelope previously provided.

I can’t believe it is nearly one year since I stepped into the office of QPPD to work together with you all. It has been challenging work, but realise that the mission of QPPD is so important. It is a mission that cannot be done by people alone, but as a group. That is why you, the members are so important. **YOU** are QPPD, it’s **NOT** the office staff that need to continue the mission to:

vigorously defend justice and rights for people with disabilities by exposing exclusionary practices, speaking out against injustices and promoting people with disabilities as respected, valued and participating members of society.

Jan Steffan
QPPD Director

ABOUT ADVOCACY

ADVOCACY IS:

Advocacy **IS** speaking, acting, writing with a minimal conflict of interest on behalf of the sincerely perceived interests of a disadvantaged person or group to promote, protect and defend their welfare and justice by:

- Being on their side and no-one else's
- Bring primarily concerned with their fundamental needs
- Remaining loyal and accountable to them in a way which is emphatic and vigorous and which is, or likely to be, costly to the advocate or advocacy group.

SOCIAL ADVOCACY PRINCIPLES

The following principles guide QPPD's social advocacy efforts.

1. Advocacy strives to be:
 - **Independent**
 - **Autonomous**
 - **On the side of the disadvantaged party**
2. Advocacy focuses on the **fundamental human needs and/or rights and interests** of people or persons by prioritising those needs/rights which have the greatest potential to minimise the person or person's vulnerability.
3. Advocacy has a **clear value base of social justice and inclusion** of people with disability as contributing/participating members of community.
4. Advocacy is about striving for **justice**
5. Advocacy is about striving for **equity**
6. All advocacy strives to **minimise actual or perceived conflict of interest**
7. Advocacy remains loyal and accountable to the disadvantaged party **over**

the long term where necessary.

8. Advocacy needs to remain **independent and distinct from service delivery** to ensure minimal conflict of interest and clarity of focus.

9. Advocacy is **NOT** service provision, case work, change agency, guardianship, a complaints/mediation/arbitration service, community development, case management, service co-ordination; friendship, support work, information and referral services, advocacy development, or representation on peak bodies.

10. Advocacy is **emphatic, vigorous and costly** or likely to be costly to the advocate or advocacy groups.

11. Advocacy agencies **model positive interactions, interpretations and imagery**, with and of, people with disability.

12. Advocacy groups have **clarity of purpose** and remain focused on their specifically funded advocacy work

SYSTEMS ADVOCACY IS:

This form of advocacy is primarily concerned with influencing and changing the system in ways that will benefit people with a disability as a group within society. Systems advocates will encourage changes to the law, government and service policies and community attitudes. Usually systems advocates do not do individual advocacy. To do so can cause conflict around the use of resources, focus and purpose.

QPPD DOES SYSTEMS ADVOCACY BY:

- ♦ Collecting information about what is happening in the lives of people with disabilities and their families from

About Advocacy.....continued

around the state

- ◆ Promoting the vision of quality lives for people with disabilities and their families
- ◆ Monitoring legislation, policies and practices regarding people with disabilities and their families
- ◆ Speaking out about systems that oppress, segregate and reject people with disabilities
- ◆ Lobbying people in positions of power to make positive changes to legislation and services
- ◆ Promoting disability as a human rights issue

SYSTEMS ADVOCACY IS NOT:

- Change agency
- Protective (Services) Measures
- Independent complaints services
- Support groups/circles
- Community involvement and integration
- Mediation, conciliation and arbitration

Don't accept being told that you must always be patient. They will tell you there isn't any money, or they are really doing things well or they need more time to determine the need. Usually impatience and persistence move bureaucracies into action, but it does take time.

INTEGRITY AND ADVOCACY

By Michael J. Kendrick PhD

- Advocates need to have exacting principles about how human beings "should be" treated
- The advocate should be willing to "bear witness" to the dark side of our nature, our communities and our social institutions
- Advocates should clearly be acting upon and accountable for the best interest of those they claim to speak on behalf of
- The advocate or advocacy group must free itself from conflicts of interest that would impair their ability to faithfully advocate
- The advocate should reasonably persevere
- Advocacy is not about winning at all cost with no regard for truth and fairness
- Advocates should not celebrate conflict and division but should hold out for whatever reconciliation and restitution is feasible
- Advocates should search for visions of authentic improvement
- Advocates should know and acknowledge the difference between their own voice and that of those who they claim to represent

For a copy of the full article contact QPPD 1800 805 184

DISABILITY ALLIANCE – ELECTION CAMPAIGN REPORT

The Disability Alliance represents a broad network of Queenslanders concerned about the ongoing neglect and social exclusion of Queenslanders with disabilities. It is not affiliated with any political party or level of government. It seeks to represent the broader sector in its pursuit of Government action. See www.disabilityalliance.org.au for more detail.

On 28th February 2009 Disability Alliance launched their Campaign, which I attended on behalf of QPPD. The purpose of the Campaign is:
...to position Disability as a mainstream issue for political parties and the wider community within the Queensland electorate and seek political support for three early intervention outcomes targeting:

- *Personal Care Support*
- *Equipment and Aids*
- *Health issues*

Personal Care

Outcomes sought:

- Increased State funding to accommodate the estimated 3000 people with disability living in Queensland who are not currently supported
- Reform of funding structures to provide more support for people with disability
- Commitment to the introduction and ongoing research into flexible funding options that will provide better outcomes for people with disability

Medical Aids and Equipment

Outcomes sought:

- A comprehensive review of the provision of aids and equipment in Queensland
- Eligibility guidelines to be broadened in order to remove barriers to accessing equipment services
- Access to appropriate aids and equipment to enable people with disability to live with dignity

Queensland Hospitals and Community Health Care

Proposals:

- A State-wide program to be developed to constructively engage people with disability and their family and support staff during treatment periods in Queensland hospitals including admission, treatment and discharge
- Disability and Health Liaison positions be established in all Metropolitan and Regional Hospitals in Queensland. These positions will be responsible for coordinating admissions and discharge planning for persons with disability receiving patient care in Queensland Hospitals
- Action be taken to address health issues highlighted in the Office of the Public Advocate Issue Paper *"In Sickness and in Health: Addressing the health care needs of adults with a decision-making disability"*

There were 4 Speakers who put forward their different perspectives on the 3 issues

Disability Alliance—Election Campaigncontinued

outlined above:

Madonna Nichol

Madonna spoke from the perspective of a person with disability who had the lived experience of inadequate support – support, she stated, was not a luxury, but an essential, necessary element to wellbeing. Madonna talked of the high percentage of people with disability that experience the following:

- Living a ‘compromised’ life by being forced to share with others for the sake of a perceived economic efficiency
- The high cost of equipment, which becomes prohibitive for some people. The subsidy for this necessary equipment is not keeping pace with cost
- The vulnerability of people with disability when they are in the health care system where their needs are not understood or attended to.

Margaret Ward

Marg talked about how we need to continue to dare to dream the ‘impossible’; we need to have a big vision. Leadership for change does not come from government (DSQ say they are leaders, but in her view, they are not). Leadership comes from people with disability, families and some service workers. Those advocating for change need to be “timely, tenacious, consistent and passionate”. “Confusion” and “amnesia” reign in government policy departments, e.g. ‘innovative housing’ is seen by DSQ as being a ‘group home’; a ‘respite house’ is seen as ‘flexible family support’. Margaret said that DSQ is gaining more and more control over people’s lives - now becoming both landlord and support provider as well as employer. She spoke of the quality management system and how Auditors have no idea of the needs of people with disability and therefore are unable to judge what constitutes a ‘quality’ service.

She stated “how do we know what to ask for?” – we ask for an ‘ordinary’ life for people with disability, the same as everyone else has. People with disability need to be self-determining, have meaningful relationships, dream dreams, earn money and contribute to society.

Kevin Cocks

Kevin stated that history always repeats itself – change only comes when people have “had enough” of abuse through programs and policies. The Queensland Disability Services Act was fantastic in that it endorsed human rights; it separated housing and support and restrained any one service having control over a person’s life. He also mentioned that now Government is suffering from ‘amnesia’. He said we have seen a decade of ‘silliness’ – of content-free management; of relationships destroyed; of work becoming ‘God’ where there was no time for reflection about what is being done and why.

In order to build a momentum for change the Alliance wants government to stop denying people with disability the authority and power to control their own lives. It is a short sighted and inhumane analysis to say that community care is too expensive. Kevin stated that the current service model in Queensland is not cost effective - it

Disability Alliance—Election Campaigncontinued

costs more than anywhere else in Australia. People with disability are rotting away, their lives wasted in group homes and disassociated from the community through policies of 'apartheid, isolation and rejection'. People with disability need to be perceived as an 'investment', not as a 'burden, a chore' and left unloved in places like residential and group homes. We have seen a decade driven by fear and risk aversion – not risk assessment.

John Mayo

John spoke of the technicalities and practicalities of running the campaign. He spoke of ongoing lobbying through as wide a range of outlets as possible. In particular he spoke of using the media – 'don't be frightened of the media' as well as getting the message out there through websites, networks and other means.

Carol Holt

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN ACADEMIC
OR
HAVE DEGREES TO DO
SYSTEMS ADVOCACY.
JUST AN ORDINARY PERSON WANTING
TO HELP BRING ABOUT CHANGE.**

YOU CAN HELP



IS THIS HAPPENING TO YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER?

*The parents of a young man who had individualised funding was advised by DSQ that in order for him to get enough support to meet his needs, he would have to give up his individual funding and pool it with the funding of two other people. No other alternatives were offered. This is not a real choice when no one in this outcome could leave this arrangement unless there was a vacancy in a similar arrangement with a similar level of funding. **DSQ call this Shared Accommodation. We call it forced co-tenancy.***

If this or similar incidences are occurring for your son or daughter, **please let us know.** We want to hear your story so that we can be clear when we advocate to government that this practice of 'forced co-tenancy' is wide-spread.

The above issue has been brought to QPPD's attention about the pressure being applied by government and many non-government services for people with disabilities to co-tenant with another person as the solution to meeting support needs rather than increasing the individual's funding package or offering other alternatives. While those who are responsible for this practice would say that people are given a choice, it is often a choice between a vacant room in someone else's already existing house, a room in a "new" house that a person will share with strangers **OR no house at all.**

It is a fundamental right to choose where and with whom one will live. Due to the seriousness of this issue of 'forced co-tenancy', the Community Safeguards Coalition of which QPPD is a member decided to seek action from the government. The Community Safeguards Coalition is a network of people with disabilities, families, friends, advocacy agencies and allies of people with disabilities in Queensland.

The Community Safeguards Coalition (CSC) members have met monthly to determine strategy to move forward. The CSC has written a four-page Position Statement (attached), defining 'forced co-tenancy' and outlining the negative impact it is having on the lives of people with disability and their family. On the 17th March representatives of the Coalition, people with disabilities and allies went to the previous Minister's office to talk about the issue and present the Position Statement.

During this meeting a number of issues were raised. Some of these are as follows:

1. Block funding locks people with a disability into a difficult situation because the funding cannot be transferred. The person leaves the service and they lose the funding.
2. DSQ's Shared Accommodation model has created unintended consequences for people with disability and their family. The objective of the Shared Accommodation program may have been well meant in that it appeared to be an effective way to use scarce resources and not to allow any 'beds' go empty in funded arrangements. However, the inadvertent

Is this Happening to your son or daughtercontinued

consequence is that the person with a disability can find themselves in places that may be a long way from their family and community simply because that is where there is a vacancy. Another example would be a person living in their own accommodation very happily for many years and making the place their 'home'. Over time, the person's needs increase. On seeking more support from government, the person learns that the only way support will be provided is through another person moving into their home. It was probably not the intention of the Shared Accommodation program to disrupt this person's home life, but this is an unintended consequence.

3. Parents want to secure a future for their sons/daughters. However, parents are now fearful that their son or daughter may not be able to access public housing because of the current policy of Queensland Housing and the Memorandum of Understanding between DSQ and Queensland Housing which prevents people with disability accessing public housing unless they have an adequate support package from DSQ. **No other Queensland Housing tenant has to provide such information.**
4. There is a reluctance to fund individuals and there has been no funding round for 2 years in relation to adult life style support packages.
5. People with disabilities have found that they can't exit out of a service because funding is not transportable and they are therefore trapped unless a vacancy occurs in a similar situation.

At the end of this meeting, members of CSC sought a commitment from government to engage in meaningful discussions with representatives of the sector to find practical solutions to the issues.

The Coalition asked for a response within 24 hours of the meeting.

The next day a response was received from the Deputy Premier, Paul Lucas, stating that the Bligh government committed to immediately engaging with representatives from the Coalition and other interested groups around the issue. This is considered a significant step forward, however only another step in the process.

We at QPPD and other members of the Community Safeguards Coalition are interested in hearing from people with disability and those who have sons or daughters in co-tenancy situations. We believe that if we can present DSQ with non-identifying stories about the co-tenancy issues for people in Queensland, DSQ will be more likely to take notice and work with us to find solutions. There needs to be a paradigm shift towards a rights based delivery of services.

We would like to hear from YOU -

- Your story,

Is this happening to your son or daughtercontinued

- If you or your family member is in a co-tenancy situation – is it working or not?
- Were you offered other options rather than co-tenancy?
- Did you feel pressured or intimidated?

Please email or post your stories to the QPPD office qppd@qppd.org – PO Box 466, Salisbury, Qld 4107, or ring us on the free call number 1800 805 184.

To know more about the Disability Services Act please log onto the following website. <http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/ACTS/2006/06AC012.pdf>

**Systems Advocacy
Is meant to be done
as team work**

-

**NOT BY ONE OR
TWO**

Will you get involved?



MY LIFE, MY HOME, MY SOLUTION



POSITION STATEMENT



of



COMMUNITY SAFEGUARDS COALITION



Safeguarding people with disability from legislation,
policies and practices that deny or
limit their fundamental rights



2009



1. BACKGROUND

The Community Safeguards Coalition (CSC) is a network of advocacy agencies, people with disability and their families, friends, advocates and allies of people with disability in Queensland (see Appendix 1).

Our Mission:

To promote people with disability having the equal right, together with the appropriate support and resources to the same range of lifestyles as other people by safeguarding against legislation, policies and practices that limit or deny their fundamental rights.

Our Aims:

- To provide a mechanism for a collective of like-minded people to undertake united and rights-based action
- To examine and analyse government policy and practice which dictates the ways that people with disability are supported in Queensland
- To raise awareness of any negative impacts that government legislation, policy and practice have on people with disability

Our Beliefs:

We believe that people with disability have a right to:

- Live in the community with choices equal to others
- Be included and participate in the community
- Choose their place of residence on an equal basis with others and not be obliged to live in any particular living arrangement

2. PREAMBLE

People with disability are disempowered in many ways: mostly through being part of a low socio-economic grouping where there is less participation in all areas - such as school, further education, and workforce participation - low income, low home ownership and lower weekly income than the rest of the Australian population. The disempowerment is heightened when the choice to live where and with whom one wishes is severely narrowed.

To most of us our home is our sanctuary where we have a sense of ownership, privacy, retreat, security and belonging. In 2007, CSC began a Campaign, called *My Life, My Home, My Solution*, with the launch of a booklet of the same name. The main message was:

When people with disability take control of their housing and their lives, just like everybody else, they create better solutions.

This Position Statement is the next step in the Campaign.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to express concern about the growing practice of people with disability being put under pressure by current Government and non-government services to live in housing situations which are not appropriate to their needs or which they do not choose. The CSC is naming this practice 'forced co-tenancy'.

3.1 Forced Co-tenancy

Forced co-tenancy is where:

- A person is denied the fundamental right to choose where and with whom they live
- A vacancy in a group home is the only option
- A person's basic care needs will not be met unless they "agree" to another person with disability moving into their home so support can be shared
- Funding programs (block funding) are delivered in ways that force individuals to live in group situations, making them ineligible to access individual funding to move out of the group situation.

This practice is a direct contravention of Article 19(a) of the United Nations *Convention on the Human Rights of People with Disability*, which has been ratified by the Australian Government and states:

Persons with disabilities have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement.

It is only people with disability who are organised into group homes by funding bodies and service providers and who remain in such situations for life. The Department of Housing and Disability Services Queensland have developed a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate shared tenancies for people with disability. **No other public housing tenants are required to reveal information about their support needs or asked to share with strangers.**

4. KEY CONCERNS

The negative impacts of forced co-tenancy on people with disability are manifold and significant, for example:

- People's individual needs are not met
- Tenants lose the right to make important lifestyle decisions. While this is often seen as a characteristic of large institutions, it can still occur in smaller group home situations where rigidity of routines and depersonalisation can be invidious and as history has shown us, is almost inevitable
- Psychological wellbeing is compromised and this can cause serious

behavioural issues

- Quality of support is sacrificed for short-term cost-cutting; however, the cost to the individual and society outweighs the savings through increased hospital admissions, crisis interventions and specialist behavioural teams
- Past and current criminal investigations provide ample evidence that people with disability are more vulnerable to abuse including physical and sexual assault and neglect, when grouped together ²

The Disability Service Standards are an attempt to prevent the above negative impacts. These Standards, particularly 2, 3, 4 and 9 - *Individual Needs, Decision-making and Choice, Privacy, Dignity and Confidentiality, and the Protection of Legal and Human Right and Freedom from Abuse, Assault, Neglect and Exploitation* - are not being applied to these tenancy arrangements.

In addition, Hon W.J. Carter stated in his Report, *Challenging Behaviour and Disability: A Targeted Response*, report to Hon W Pitt MP (Minister for Communities Disability Services and Seniors), July 2006, that:

...large or clustered accommodation facilities are more likely to be counter-productive in addressing behavioural issues ... (whereas)...an individualised and flexible approach which provides for and specifically addresses the person's specific needs and the circumstances of the individual case is the unequivocal key element in the proper care and support for the person...

5. OUTCOMES SOUGHT

We call on Disability Services Queensland to:

1. Adopt principles, policies and practices that prevent forced co-tenancy
2. Adopt principles, policies and practices that prevent people's private homes being seen as potential sources of 'beds'
3. Ensure that control over the living arrangements of people with disability return to the authority of people with disability and/or their families
4. Restore the policy and practice of authentic individualised funding arrangements
5. Fund an innovative pilot project based on self directed funding.

6. CONCLUSION

Despite the compelling history of congregate, segregate care in Queensland and its costly human and financial ramifications; despite all the research and new models of care available, both in Australia and overseas; despite the implementation of the Disability Service Standards, the Disability Sector Quality System, and Certification of funded services; and despite the voices of the people with disability and their families seeking an inclusive, purposeful and productive life, the 'system' rolls on over people.

It is time people with disability were heard and their rights, not just acknowledged, but implemented. It is time for action and commitment to change.

2. CJC Inquiry into Basil Stafford Centre 1995; Bribie Island Care Independent Living Association Court Case 2008/09; *Papering over the Cracks: The Veneer of Prevention*. QPPD Community Investigation into the Abuse, Assault and Neglect of people with a disability receiving services provided or funded by Disability Services Queensland (DSQ) 2005.

Current Membership of Community Safeguards Coalition

Community Resource Unit Inc

Ph: (07) 3211 5700
cru@cru.org.au

Queenslanders with Disability Network Inc

Ph: (07) 3252 8566
qdn@qdn.org.au

AMPARO Advocacy Inc

Ph: (07) 3369 2500
amparo@amparo.org.au

Speaking Up For You (SUFY) Inc

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Mike Duggan

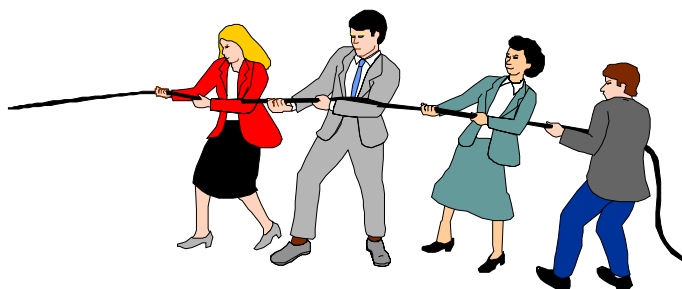
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Queensland Parents for People with a Disability Inc (QPPD)

Ph: (07) 3875 2101
Free Call: 1800 805 184
qppd@qppd.org

If you or the organisation to which you belong support the Community Safeguards Coalition recommended outcomes to government, could you please complete the co-signatories form included separately in this newsletter and return the form to the QPPD office. Thank you.

The Coalition believe that the more evidence we have to present to government the more leverage we will have in getting change to happen. We welcome hearing your story. If you to give us your story but do not wish us to use your name we would respect your request. Remember, advocacy is all of us pulling together.



PROMISES, PROMISES, PROMISES.....

The Honourable Mr. Bill Shorten made a very moving and *Promising* speech called "Right to an Ordinary Life", to the Press Club in Canberra on 1st April, 2009. (Copies may be obtained from QPPD upon request.)

From 11 pages of informative and encouraging words, an exciting and potentially ground-breaking speech from a politician in many, many years, the most revolutionary points made are as follows:-

"Support should begin on the day a child's condition is diagnosed - which in many cases is before birth.

One co-ordinator, and one only, would be appointed for each family, and deal with all the agencies, Government and non-government, working with that family.

During school there would be an emphasis on determining how the child could be as independent as possible, and eventually become part of the workforce.

It would focus on how their potential could be used and their disadvantages overcome.

When the child left school, support would continue, and that child would have a genuine choice about its future accommodation.

It would have the same freedom to leave the parental home, or to stay, that other young people have."

A CALL TO ACTION

Isn't this what we would all want for our family member with disability? Has some of this already been your experience or has none of the above ever happened for your family? QPPD wants to hear from you. Please contact us with your stories, tell us your experiences and what changes you would like see to happen.

OUR PROMISE TO YOU

We will collate all your information, stories, ideas, solutions, and submit them to the Federal and State Government department/s. We will report to you with their responses.

WE WILL MONITOR THIS CLOSELY AND ADVOCATE VIGOROUSLY TO ENSURE THAT BILL SHORTEN'S ASPIRATIONS BECOME A REALITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY AND THEIR FAMILIES.

Promises, Promises, Promisescontinued

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Send your stories by post, mail or speak with one of our volunteers by phone. Please encourage others to contact us with their thoughts and reactions to Bill Shorten's speech.

You can volunteer to help with the mailout, collate information, or give input to the submission via email.

WHAT HAPPENS THEN?

Once the Government gives its responses, we may host an information session for interested members to discuss the outcomes and possible further advocacy actions.

**PLEASE PASS THIS INFORMATION TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES.
THIS IS AN ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITY NOT TO BE MISSED!!!**

JUSTICE IN A HUMAN SERVICE: HOW DO WE ACHIEVE SUCH A THING?

Increasingly in modern life, people rely on formal human services to get their needs met. For many people, this evokes feelings of sadness and concern. No matter how much confidence one has in a particular service it is often a matter of regret that a loved one cannot be supported by family, friends, neighbours.

Many human services serve groups of people; by their very nature it is challenging to focus on individuals and even more difficult to craft a set of responses uniquely relevant for each person. Some services do however serve people as individuals and constantly strive to focus on each person.

In striving to be a good human service, to be a socially just human service, several principles or concepts can assist us. That is, social justice in human services requires a focus on, at least, Social Inclusion, Self-Determination, Self-Governance, Right Relationship, and Person-Centredness.

When asked about social justice in the context of human services people often speak about **equity** (of access and service). This idea of equity focuses our attention on how we might ensure fairness and impartiality in providing services. Equity often leads us to think about bureaucracy, that is, the application of rules and regulations applied rigidly to ensure no one gets more than another.

But our concern here is to consider how people might attain equity in life or even more than equity – how people might be assisted to as much as possible get the good things in life? This goes further than the idea of all people getting an equal share and moves into supporting people to get what they need. This is also called positive discrimination or positive compensation; or more colloquially, bending over backwards to assist people.

Social integration or **Social Inclusion** can be many things. Here we use it as the participation of devalued people in typical social interactions and relationships with non-devalued citizens, participating in community and society, and contributing to social and cultural life. This means someone who is marginalised, say someone who is long-term unemployed being socially included in meaningful relationships and activities with say someone who is well regarded, like a business mentor. Receiving a human service should not restrict one's social inclusion; indeed services providing accommodation support and some others should be focussing on people's personal social integration as a critical aspect of what they provide. The Victorian project 'Count us in!', on social inclusion in residential aged care, is an interesting attempt to address these issues in one human service type.¹

Self-Determination can be understood as people having the degree of control they desire over those aspects of life that are important to them (this is based on the assumption that the amount of personal control people have in their lives is one, but not the only component, of self-determination). Self-determination refers to the amount of personal control people have over their lives in both how much control they want and/or are most likely to do well with. For example someone with a disability wanting to be able to get a good education, find a job that they enjoy and

¹ Department of Human Services, "Count Us In! - Social Inclusion for People Living in Residential Aged Care," ed. Department of Human Services (Melbourne: Department of Human Services, 2006).

Justice in Human Service.....continued

to control their medical arrangements. This also needs consideration of the capacities of persons to exercise control in life decisions (skills, knowledge, and attitudes and beliefs) and of the environments where they spend time (family, community, residential and employment programs, etc.) so as to support and encourage them in exercising control in their lives.

Right Relationship – behaving toward the people we serve in ways that they then feel is helpful and respectful. And in ways that such behaviour is considered typical, ordinary, part of our daily practice rather than the exception or something special. There is much we can do to work towards establishing right relationship between services and the people served and these will be explored in a later edition. However one example might be that a professional is working with a person, who knows what they want more than the professional does. The professional's role may be to look at options and the person can then choose what option works best for them. For a challenging paper on these matters please read 'Investing In Strategies That Give Life' by Michael Kendrick.²

Person-Centredness requires putting the person at the centre of determining what service/s will be delivered and how that will occur. This takes respectful communication with, and responding to, the person in ways that enhance his/her capacity to exercise control or personal agency in how they are assisted through formal human services. For example, to remain living at home an older person would be assisted by a provider to work out just what forms of support s/he needed (even where they require assistance to participate in this process from a loved one who knows them well). Person-centredness underlies social inclusion, self-determination, and right relationship.

In this edition we will firstly explore a little of the origins of 'person-centredness' and consider briefly some ideas around better serving people. We will also explore a UnitingCare service response (from Disability Services in Lifeline Community Care). This services attempts to respond to each person as uniquely as possible. In the next edition we will introduce another UnitingCare service and explore the journey to more person centred practice.

We invite you to read the full newsletter at www.ucareqld.com.au/SocialJustice.

² Michael Kendrick, "Investing in Strategies That Give Life," in *Like a Sweet Cup of Tea: Sharing Lives, Neighbourhoods and Communities*, ed. Pam Collins (Brisbane: CRU Publications, 2004).

QCOSS

Social Policy and Advocacy Forums 2009

Attention community organisations, local government workers and members of the community...

The **Queensland Council of Social Service** is the peak body for 600 community sector organisations in Queensland. QCOSS has worked for over fifty years for a fair, inclusive and sustainable Queensland.

Each year we engage our members and stakeholders in a number of social policy and advocacy forums across the state as part of our ongoing **commitment to represent** the views of the sector in our policy and advocacy work.

The social policy issues and feedback collected in these forums **will inform QCOSS policy** positions throughout the year and contribute to the annual budget submission. Through this budget submission there is scope to **influence the shape** of government social policy and investment in Queensland.

The 2009 forums aim to be **solution based** and come up with solid recommendations which can be advocated to the State Government. Participants from previous years have described these forums as a **valuable opportunity** for networking with other services in each area.

In 2009 these Forums will give

- Give you and your organisation the opportunity to comment on social issues faced by your community and workshop recommendations to address them
- Analyse opportunities for local advocacy arising from the state election
- Report back on QCOSS advocacy work in 2008 and the local and statewide results of the previous round of policy forums
- Improve QCOSS' regional networks and mechanisms for feeding in to our policy and advocacy work

REGISTER NOW! Call Allyson Spears on 3004 6900

or email policy@qcross.org.au

See overleaf for dates & venues

Location	Date & Time	Venue
Gold Coast	Monday 20 April 9:30am – 1:30pm	Southport Library, Lawson St, Southport
Logan	Tuesday 28 April 10:00am – 2:00pm	Kingston Butter Factory, Milky Way, Kingston
Mackay	Tuesday 5 May 10:00am – 2:00pm	TBA
Sunshine Coast	Thursday 7 May 9:30am – 1:30pm	Nambour Community Centre, 2 Shearer St, Nambour
Brisbane	Tuesday 12 May 9:30am – 3:30pm	QCOSS Office, 20 Pidgeon Cl, West End
Bamaga – <i>New!</i>	Monday 18 May 1:00pm – 5:00pm	Resort Bamaga, Crn Lui & Adidi Steets, Bamaga

Location	Date & Time	Venue
Cairns	Wednesday 20 May 10:00am – 2:00pm	Cairns City Library, 151 Abbott St, Cairns
Longreach – <i>New!</i>	Wednesday 20 May 10:30am – 2:30pm	Department of Primary Industries, Landsborough Highway, Longreach
Roma	Tuesday 26 May 10:00am – 2:00pm	Roma Neighbourhood Centre, 44 Quintin St, Roma
Toowoomba – <i>Multicultural focus</i>	Tuesday 26 May 11:00am – 12:00pm	Toowoomba Multicultural Network, 17 Long St, Toowoomba
Rockhampton	Thursday 28 May 10:00am – 3:30pm	Juwarki Kapu-Lug Corporation, 175 East St, Rockhampton
Mount Isa	Thursday 4 June 9:30am – 1:30pm	Mount Isa RSL, 89 Barkley Highway, Mount Isa
Kingaroy	Tuesday 16 June 10:00am to 3:30pm	TBA
Maryborough	Wednesday 17 June 10:00am – 3:30pm	Maryborough Neighbourhood Centre 25 Ellena St, Maryborough
Townsville	Tuesday 23 June 10:00am – 3:30pm	TBA
Brisbane – <i>Youth focus</i>	Tuesday 9 June 1:00pm – 4:00pm	QCOSS Office, 20 Pidgeon Cl, West End
Multicultural – <i>Health focus</i>	Thursday 14 May 10:30am – 11:30am	CHAG, Multicultural Development Agency, 512 Stanley St, Sth BNE
Multicultural – <i>Housing focus</i>	Tuesday 21 April 1:30pm – 2:30pm	ASHRAM, ECCQ 253 Boundary St, West End
Multicultural – <i>Employment focus</i>	Tuesday 2 June 10:00am – 11:00am	MEAN, Multicultural Development Agency, 512 Stanley St, Sth BNE

Register to attend one of our statewide Social Policy Forums and Advocacy Workshops by simply emailing your details, including any dietary requirements to policy@qcross.org.au or by phoning Allyson Spears on 07 3004 6900

You will be contacted shortly after registering with a confirmation email containing further details

All of our participants will receive an advocacy kit and regional summary report

All of our Policy Forums and Advocacy Workshops are FREE in 2009

*Daring to Dream...
Stories of parent advocacy
in Queensland*



Daring to Dream enriches the advocacy movement and adds to our understanding of the values, principles and strategies guiding parent advocates over the last two decades.

This book which is written by Jennifer Barrkman is about the stories of some of the many parents who became involved in Queensland Parents for People with a Disability (QPPD) since the organisation began twenty years ago. They became leaders, advocating for their sons and daughters to be fully included in all aspects of life.

From their stories we can learn about advocacy, the courage required to effect change and the continual ongoing daily struggle to work within often inflexible systems.

Though published in 2002, this book still is a vital resource and encouragement to parents who advocate for their children.

At only \$10 a copy (including postage) (Free to financial members) this is a good book for parents and those in the advocacy field.

Order your copy now from the QPPD office.

INCLUSIVE LIVES

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA

SURFACE
MAIL

*A newsletter mailout to support advocacy
on behalf of people with disabilities.*

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ABN: 46587 110642

Queensland Parents for People with a Disability vigorously defends justice and rights for people with disabilities by exposing exclusionary practices, speaking out against injustices and promoting people with disabilities as respected, valued and participating members of society.