



E.W. TIPPING FOUNDATION



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30 April 2015

Ms Jeanette Radcliffe  
Committee Secretary  
Community Affairs References Committee  
Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT, 2600

Email: [community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Ms Radcliffe

I am writing in response to the submissions made by Ms Julie Pianto on behalf of her son Christopher Heenan for the:

*Inquiry into adequacy of existing residential care arrangements available for young people with severe physical, mental or intellectual disabilities in Australia*  
and

*Inquiry into violence, abuse and neglect against people with disability in institutional and residential settings.*

#### Organisation Background

The E.W. Tipping Foundation has a proud history of more than 45 years of providing support services to people with a disability. We work together with close to 1000 Victorians with a disability and with young people who have been removed from their family home, due to some sort of breakdown, into residential care (known as Out of Home Care).

The E.W. Tipping Foundation was named in honour of Walkley Award winning journalist E.W. (Bill) Tipping. Bill wrote about social justice issues in the 1940's through until the 60's in The Herald. He believed that more could and should be done for people with a disability. He had personal experience with his son, Peter, who had cerebral palsy and had lived in Kew Cottages for a short period of time (a Victorian institution for people with a disability).

Bill Tipping tapped into a raw nerve with many other parents and community members when he wrote about more being done for people with a disability. There were many other parents of adult children with a disability seeking an answer to the troubling question of 'what happens to my child when I die or when I am no longer able to care for them?' We still hear this question daily in our service provision.

At least 1700 people turned up at an impromptu meeting at the Melbourne Town Hall to discuss this complex issue and others. This was the beginning of the E.W. Tipping Foundation.

Today, we provide support services to clients in their own homes and in shared supported accommodation homes, in the community, in workplaces, wherever the need may be. Regardless of the setting of the service provision we work closely with our clients, and their families, to understand individual needs, preferences and goals and deliver our services in a way that allows individuals to achieve what they want to achieve.

**We work together  
so everyone  
has a fair go**

**We work together  
with people who  
have disabilities**

**We work together  
with children who  
are vulnerable**

**We work together  
with families**

In the last 45 years we have seen the sector change enormously along with the approach to service provision for people with a disability. We are now preparing for the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), a welcome initiative which will align the funding, respect and choices that people with a disability are due.

We are currently successfully operating in the NDIS Barwon trial site. Our client base in this area is growing and we welcome the positive feedback on our involvement in the NDIS trial site but more importantly welcome the enhanced experiences and choices available to our clients.

Organisationally, we are also rolling out a series of NDIS readiness projects in order to best manage our service delivery, client expectations and experiences in this changing sector.

### **Ms Pianto's Submission**

I received a copy of Julie Pianto's submission "Our Experience of Supported Accommodation" in September 2013. This has formed the basis of her submission to the above inquiries.

We are very open to feedback and actively encourage our clients and their families to speak up and say something. We welcome the opportunity to improve our services. We seek to continuously learn and improve.

Similarly, we feel there is additional value to our clients and their families that we work closely with others to provide a high level of service or resolve issues. We collaborate with other providers, professionals, independent offices such as the Office of the Disability Services Commissioner, government departments, for example the Department of Human Services, advocates or peak bodies. Our philosophy is that with more expertise around the table we will have more robust discussions which hopefully lead to better outcomes and/or solutions.

While I am very disappointed that Ms Pianto was clearly not satisfied with the services that her son Christopher received nor with the collaborative efforts of us, the Office of the Disability Services Commissioner and DHS to try to resolve her issues I acknowledge that there are areas where we could have done better.

Ms Pianto's submission has assisted us in focussing attention on ways in which we can improve our service delivery. Some examples of improvements that have been made that may have gone some way to address Ms Pianto's concerns were outlined in a letter that I sent to her on 16 September 2013. I have included a copy with this submission.

By way of summary, the following outlines some of the improvements in process and systems:

- Improvements to our Client Intake and Access process
- Introduction of a new complaints management system that ensures we consistently manage complaints and respond in a timely manner
- Reviewing and updating our Client Welcome Information Booklet
- A greater investment in training and development of Occupational Health and Safety practices
- We have also worked closely with the Office of the Disability Services Commissioner to improve our Customer Service Focus to tailor our approach for clients and families who are accessing external care support (for the first time).



In the time since my last communication with Ms Pianto the organisation has continued on its pathway for service improvement as demonstrated by the following further changes:

- We now have a specific Board level sub-committee with oversight of service delivery chaired by a member of the Board – The Practice and Quality Committee.
- We have also committed our ongoing involvement in the La Trobe University Person Centred Active Support research and training program. The Person Centred Active Support approach improves the way in which we facilitate meaningful engagement and activities for the clients we support through staff training. Research tells us that involving clients in everyday activities and choices lead to greater independence, greater satisfaction and a reduction in challenging behaviours.
- We have recently undertaken an independent client satisfaction survey with Monash University and the Summer Foundation which was an evaluation of client and family perspectives on our disability support services. This report has provided some recommendations which are either already in development or we are committed to implementing.
- We have also made an organisational stance and commitment to a Zero Tolerance to Abuse as well as supporting industry wide approaches, such as the National Disability Service's recommended approach to a zero tolerance to abuse. We have produced publications and included this zero tolerance to abuse messaging in my twice annual organisational road show across Victoria. I am of the philosophy that we are much better off by having these difficult conversations than the alternative.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our response to these inquiries. We are fully supportive of a process which can research, identify and recommend systemic improvements for people with a disability.

We can provide further information as required.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Kelly  
Chief Executive Officer



# E.W. TIPPING FOUNDATION

Leading a network supporting: Independence. Choice. Community for all.

16 September 2013

Ms Julie Pianto  
[REDACTED]

Dear Julie

We acknowledge receipt of your review titled "Our Experience of Supported Accommodation" which was forwarded to our organisation via the Office of the Disability Services Commissioner (ODSC).

The organisation has reflected upon the contents of the review and your observations and recommendations have been included in our own review where we have identified changes to our practice which we believe will improve our service provision for the client, the client's family and our staff.

Some of these improvements are as follows:-

- 1 Planning – there has been a complete review and re-write of our Client Intake & Access process.
- 2 A new Complaints Management System has been implemented and centralised to ensure that we capture and process all complaints in a timely and responsive manner and that resolutions are documented and tracked for progress.
- 3 We have reviewed our Client Welcome Information Booklet.
- 4 We have invested more resources into training and also into ensuring a safe work place for clients and staff via an OH&S Strategy and advanced reporting system.
- 5 A new Client Satisfaction Action Plan has been implemented to improve our Customer Service focus.

We have also met with representatives of the ODSC and discussed the need for a tailored communication approach for clients and their families who are accessing external care support for the first time. We believe that we can do more here to clarify our role, client and family expectation and ensure that all stakeholders in this process including DHS provide the necessary and accurate information for the family and the client.

We acknowledge and respect your decision to not return Christopher to the supported accommodation home and cease service provision with the organisation. We wish you and Christopher all the very best.

Yours sincerely  
[REDACTED]

Graeme Kelly  
Chief Executive Officer

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