

29th January 2004

Dear Sir or Madam:

Re: drug dependence and the *Disability Discrimination Amendment Bill*

Oolong House is a residential, alcohol and other drug rehabilitation center. Our staff and management fully endorse the enclosed submission presented by Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre Inc.

We share the concerns detailed in this submission. If this Bill is passed, we predict widespread and disastrous effects for the entire community. In our experience as alcohol and other drug professionals, every person in recovery from addictions needs support, respect, gainful opportunities, safe accommodation, and access to a variety of goods and services (just like the rest of us do). Without these things in place, people will NOT recover. And their children will not stand a chance of bettering the greatly disadvantaged circumstances they grew up in.

Addicts and alcoholics always end up in one of three conditions: locked up, covered up, or sobered up. The proposed bill would quickly eliminate the only desirable condition (i.e. 'sobered up'). "Locked up" would mean over-crowded prisons, asylums and hospitals. People might be reluctant to enter treatment altogether: would they not think 'what's the point?' since they won't have a chance of maintaining their recovery upon completion of their treatment? Influenced by the proposed Bill, perhaps they'd consider 'covered up' as the best option instead.

This Bill would eliminate any addict's chance of recovery, and any chance of helping their children 'break the cycle' in order to avoid becoming burdens to society. This Bill would: drain public coffers; overcrowd hospitals, asylums, and jails; increase crime and stretch policing resources; increase expenses for all '000' services; eliminate hope for addicts and their families; and kill people.

We hope that Federal Parliament will consider this Bill, and its elimination, very carefully. Eliminate the Bill before it eliminates society as we know it.

Yours Sincerely,



Leroy Johnson
Deputy C.E.O.

Yours Sincerely,



Nicole Ballinger
Senior Counselor