

26<sup>th</sup> July 2004

The Secretary  
Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee  
Suite S1 59  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am putting in a submission as an individual concerned person. These are my views only and based on knowing many young people living in nursing homes or a risk of going into a nursing home.

The following thoughts sum up what I hear people saying to me about living in a nursing home.

*I have a dream of living in community  
Not in a nursing home  
Not having to have a shower or a bath when the staff tell you to  
Not having tablets which make you go to the toilet and lose your dignity  
Not being able to decide on when I can eat or go to bed  
All I want is a place in the community that I can call home  
I want to be able to employ people who care about me  
Not a room where people are dying around me.  
I'm only sixteen. I'm only twenty-six. I'm only thirty-six. I'm only forty-six.  
I'm only fifty-six.  
Old before my time*

Everyone needs a place they can call home. Somewhere private and totally yours. Being able to have friends over whenever you want. Support needs to be friendly and relevant to people's needs. Having your own space allows you to have a life.

Nursing homes are not always nice places to visit. When you are young you want to have lots of friends. People don't like to visit nursing homes and therefore young people miss out on friendship.

Younger people with disabilities want to be able to make their own decisions. Not to be told what to do by government and bureaucracy. At the moment some people have no choice at all.

Yours faithfully,

Donna Best