

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

28th July 2004

From : Faye Townley

SENATE INQUIRY INTO AGED CARE

I wish to make a submission to the Senate with reference to the Inquiry into Aged Care, specifically item (C) in the Terms of Reference, " the appropriateness of young people with disabilities being accommodated in residential aged care facilities.....".

This area now affects my family directly as my sister, Jocelyn (aged 47) suffers from the sinister, progressive and debilitating disease Multiple Sclerosis. She is a single parent with 3 boys, and until 2004 has maintained her family despite the many painful and heartbreaking obstacles presented along the way as a result of the m.s.

Jocelyn is now unable to look after herself and needs a hoist and 2 nurses to lift her from the bed to the wheelchair, she cannot wheel herself, has extreme difficulty in trying to feed herself, and has a permanent catheter as she cannot get to the bathroom.

Earlier this year, Jocelyn was admitted to hospital with pneumonia, had a fall in the hospital, broke an ankle and spent another 8 weeks in plaster. In all, she spent over 3 months in hospital and can no longer hope to return home. Her children are now compelled to find alternative accommodation as the house has been rented from the Housing Commission.

Jocelyn is currently in Interim care for 4 weeks while the family applies to 6 nursing homes, as this apparently is the procedure at this stage.

Our family, and extended family has been devastated by Jocelyn's plight, her distress, suffering and humiliation with her current situation, and the uncertainty of her future is producing further stress and trauma.

There is an urgent need in our community for smaller, permanent residential facilities where young people with m.s. and other neurological diseases can receive nursing care pertinent to their particular needs. They deserve company, conversation, stimulation and incentives to make their lives as meaningful as possible.

Yours faithfully,

Faye Townley