

## SENATE INQUIRY INTO AGED-CARE

RE: Young people in "Nursing Homes"

Opening statement from Mr Anthony Samuels JP

Firstly may I say, how pleased I was to receive news about this enquiry taking place. The Issue of Young people in Nursing Homes, is one of which I feel overwhelming passionate about. If I was to live long enough, I too will need full-time care, and I don't want to be placed in a Nursing Home as I know it isn't for me. I pray and hope that my higher power enables me to keep my mobility just long enough that a more appropriate environment, perhaps "Home for younger people" rather than "Aged care facilities" be available when I need full-time Nursing Care.

I talk from both a personal and professional perspective when I say that if I need full-time Care now and I was placed in a Nursing Home (Aged Care) this will ultimately kill me in a short space of time it is important for me to express at this point that I have extreme respect for older people and hold them in high regard and have nothing personal against them however I could not live with them Full-Time as a younger person with disabilities.

MY CONDITION AND HISTORY: (FROM A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE)

I was born with hereditary Muscular Dystrophy however it wasn't until about 3 years of age that the diagnosis and confirmation was made. As you will read in a newspaper article annex "A" I struggled with this condition growing up so much so, (that I know now), through lots of therapy and soul searching was the soul reason for my alcoholism. I just did not want this condition which was restricting me physically. I wanted to run, play football etc..... like every other boy however, I couldn't. The more I got angry, the angrier I got until I found a friend in "drink" looking back although I suffered with my alcoholism. I am pleased it hit me early in life, as I've been able to enjoy in my life, with my own family and help other's. This year I have been sober 22 of my 44 years.

I feel, this information is extremely important as it has formed the foundation of the person I am today and is the reason for why, I wouldn't survive in a Nursing Home. I have an extremely strong will to survive, my mind is extremely active and strong willed and this is where the problems would come into play for some-one like me in a Nursing Home.

I accept from a physical perspective. I am slowly breaking down however, I am defying all the odds against me in this department as well. I have been told I should be in a wheelchair and will need full-time care eventually however, what does worry me is not what the carer's will do for me physically but what you are going to do for my mental state!!! sitting me in front of a T.V or Playing Bingo would send me backwards.

### FROM A PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVE:

I needed to know, what would happen to some-one like me whom is physically disabled however Mentally/Emotionally Sound?? The best way for me to find out, was to enrol in an "Aged Care" course, get my certificate and work in the Industry..... this was the only way I could "Walk The Talk" (See it for myself first hand). I completed the course 1997-1998 and proudly topped my class, and won an award from TAFE N.S.W as one of the highest marks out of all doing Aged Care.

I began also volunteering in Nursing Homes and still do this today. What I have clearly noted over the years working, caring and observing in particular the "Younger People" in Nursing Homes" was a steady decline in their Mental state which lead to some being depressed and not recovering.

### THIS COULD BE THE CLASSIC SCENARIO FOR ME.

These people were beautifully taken care of physically however, were not challenged mentally nor emotionally.

it's fine to have Active Officers in Nursing Homes however, what is needed is "QUALITY" stimulation...his is another pet love of mine providing "QUALITY" to these resident.

I am providing quality today by taking one of my club shows into Nursing Homes. What I find remarkable, is the difference In these people whom have Quality one on one attention and for that moment in time you remove them from where they are emotionally.

I must admit it is a skill to remove someone from their world and invite them into yours.

I learnt from an early aged that if you leave someone sitting in a barber's chair long enough, they will eventually get that hair cut. So in short if you have people like myself living with much older people continually it only stands to reason that my Mental/Emotional Ability will decrease. What do they say, "use it or lose it"....

I don't want my mind to go if it is all I have left.


**WHAT WOULD I LIKE TO SEE OCCUR FROM THIS ENQUIRY.**

**Most Importantly that the acknowledgement of: it is not appropriate for younger people with disabilities to be placed in a Nursing Home (Aged Care Facilities) be put from words into Actions ....**

**We need to build appropriate facilities that house Younger People With Disabilities... These facilities could be perhaps larger than the current "Disability Hostels" We have in place.**

**IN CLOSING:**

**I thank all the people involved in this enquiry, and hope that a productive outcome is achieve and in my case a more suitable facility is available for when the time comes for me, to be cared for..**

  
(MR. A. SAMUELS) JP  
7/7/2004