

17<sup>th</sup> December 2004

## SUBMISSION

To the Senate Community Affairs References Committee

On the Aged care Inquiry.

Terms of Reference (c) The appropriateness of young people with disabilities being accommodated in residential aged care facilities and the extent to which residents with special needs, such as dementia, mental illness or specific conditions are met under current funding arrangements.

## INTRODUCTION

This submission is from:

Ms. Gail Foy

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

Dear Secretary,

I am writing on behalf of my daughter, Amber Foy. Amber is 30 years old and was born with Cerebral Palsy and an intellectual disability. Amber has been living in an Aged Care Facility for 6 years and is suffering from suffering from clinical depression.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2004 Amber was moved out of a Nursing Home and into a supported accommodation home. As I write this letter Amber has only been in the home for 6 days.

Amber has settled into the home extremely well and already there is a difference in her personality. She is laughing, which is something she has not done for a long time. She is also interacting with the other clients very well and the carers at the home are surprised with how well she has adjusted to the move in such a short period of time.

Amber now has a choice of what she would like to do, what time she wants to go to bed and what she wants to eat and even what clothes she would like to wear for the day. She had none of these choices at the nursing home.

Firstly, she didn't do anything, just sat with the frail/elderly residents sometimes listening to pre-war music. She doesn't have to go to bed at 5.30pm anymore and her food is home cooked, not pureed hospital food.

Amber can now access physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech therapists. She was never able to do this in the nursing home.

Amber lost her ability to use sign language, to chew her food properly, as it was pureed; she also lost a lot of muscle tone because of the lack of exercise and her weight dropped down to 39 kilos.

She does not have to endure the indignity of having to take laxatives and given suppositories for her bowels anymore. With nutritional food and exercise her bowels should work normally again.

Ambers' personality is really shining through since she has left the nursing home. At long last she has a life worth living.

No young person should be placed in aged care facilities for whatever reason. These places are not suitable for young people as they end up depressed and losing the will to live.

Young people need the stimulation of their peers; they need to be able to make choices for themselves and they need to access the community. They need a purpose in life, not given a life sentence locked away in a nursing home with the frail/elderly, demented and dying residents. Even convicted criminals are eventually paroled from gaol.

Both State and Federal Governments need to act NOW to remove these young people in nursing homes and give them supported accommodation homes to live in so that they have a better quality of life. The Government also needs to STOP letting anymore young people enter nursing homes. These institutions are NO place for young people who have much to give and to receive from the community.

My lengthy, constant battle with the NSW Government has finally finished and Amber has a bright future ahead of her now.

In the very near future I intend lobbying the Government for the other 6000 odd young people in nursing homes across Australia because I can see first hand the difference it has made to Ambers' life outside of the nursing home.

## SUMMARY

I have attached a recent news article regarding Ambers' transfer from the nursing home into a supported accommodation home and how it has changed her life.

I sincerely hope the Senate Community Affairs References Committee takes this story into account when the Inquiry re-commences.

Yours sincerely

Gayl Foy

# Mum's joy as Amber moves to new home

**Doubts disappeared as daughter happily waved her goodbye**

By THERESE SHIER

CASINO woman Gayl Foy's long campaign to have her 30-year-old daughter Amber moved out of an aged care home into a house with other young adults has succeeded.

Mrs Foy has been battling for more than two years to have Amber, who has cerebral palsy, moved into supported accommodation.

When she received the email from the NSW Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care (DADHC) telling of the offer, she felt both excited and apprehensive.

"I couldn't believe it would actually happen," she said.

"I was really, really happy, but anxious to know what the house was like and how Amber would react."

Mrs Foy's worries rapidly disappeared when she saw the house and realised

that Amber would now be living in a family home.

With daughter Nicki along to help, she set about decorating Amber's new bedroom and moving in her favourite knick knacks.

When the big day arrived for Amber to move in, Mrs Foy was worried how Amber would react to her new surroundings.

However, any doubts disappeared when Amber happily waved her goodbye.

"It's the best Christmas present Amber and I have ever had," she said.

"Amber is with people her own age and there's a lot more things for her to do."

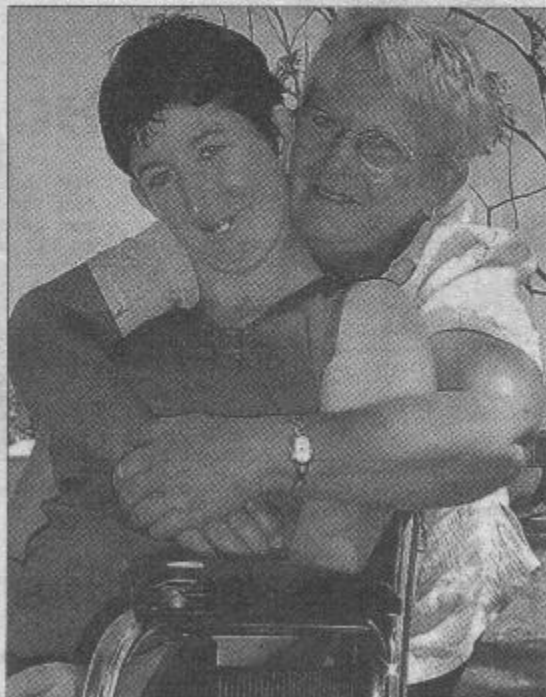
When she's had a rest, Mrs Foy wants to help other young adults with disabilities who are still in aged care homes.

"I can't stop now," Mrs Foy said. "With Amber it was a personal thing, but it's given me a cause."

"It's meant to be, it's my calling."

## ■ What do you think?

Phone the Star Feedback line on 6624 3266 or email [opinions@northernstar.com.au](mailto:opinions@northernstar.com.au)



**PERSEVERANCE PAYS OFF:** Amber Foy gets a hug from mother, Gayl. Mrs Foy's long campaign to find suitable accommodation for her daughter has ended, with Amber's move to a community house at Goonellabah.