

CIPAID INC Community and Institutional Parents' Action on Intellectual Disability

“For those who Care”

Patron: His Excellency Dr Peter Hollingworth, AC, OBE Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

Associated with:- APA, Australian Parent Advocacy, RESCARE (UK), RESCARE (NZ).
Postal Address c/- Locked Bag 15, Kew 3101; Tel 9854 1497, Fax 9854 1466.
ACN No ADD19798R: President Bob Riddiford 9480 3997, Public Officer Kevin Ryan 5968 4027

April 1, 2003

SUBMISSION TO THE DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT INQUIRY

For many years it seems to us that intellectually disabled people have been discriminated against in Australia by the public policy of compulsory deinstitutionalisation.

This policy of compulsory deinstitutionalisation, as implemented by successive Australian Government is in essence totalitarian not democratic.

It treats intellectually disabled people as objects to be moved around to suit some (supposed) higher purpose, as determined by ideologues and bureaucrats, not as human beings, with the same democratic human right of choice as other Australians.

It is discriminatory because the intellectually disabled victims of this policy are the only members of the community denied the right of choice in housing design. They are denied access to cluster housing and village style communities.

The policy is anti-family because when they have been surveyed, some 80% of parents and siblings favor villages and clusters as **one** of the forms of accommodation which should be offered as a choice for the Intellectually Disabled and their parents.

Although it is described as normalisation, this policy rests on a fantasy, namely that putting all disabled people into 5 bedroom houses will mean they are no longer disabled and will take part in normal community life, irrespective of their disability.

For the more intellectually disabled this is obviously absurd. Disabled people should be housed according to their needs, as is the norm in the community at large.

Diverse housing, based on need and choice, offers the best foundation for an inclusive society.

If an intellectually disabled person cannot make choices, the right of choice should, in the first instance, belong to the parents and other family members.

In the closure of institutions like Caloola, Janefield and Kew Cottages, the driving force of the ‘close all institutions’ policy has been land value, not people value and a concern for an inclusive community. Only a few of the 450 residents of Kew Cottages will be allowed to stay on site, despite their stated preference. Most of this magnificent residential site will be allocated to up market housing.

The Intellectually Disabled are a powerless group easily pushed around by cost cutting governments and despotic bureaucrats and policy makers.

We would submit that the policy in the UK is non discriminatory. It is based on the non discriminatory principle that people with (learning) intellectual disability should be given a genuine opportunity to choose between housing, care and support options. Local councils should therefore ensure

that all housing options are considered when they are exploring the future housing, care and support needs of people with learning disabilities and their families. These options should include small-scale ordinary housing, supported living and village and intentional communities, as well as residential care. None of these should be ruled out.

We would hope that the inquiry will find that these same democratic and humane principles must be followed by all governments in Australia.

Yours sincerely,

Robert.F.Riddiford
(President)