

VINCENT  
Townsville  
QLD  
4814

11<sup>th</sup> May 2010

Productivity Commission Aged Care  
Locked Bag 2  
Collins Street East  
MELBOURNE  
Vic Australia 8003

**Attention: Productivity Commission Inquiry into Aged Care.**

**\*In an article published in "The Age" on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2010, Ms. Nicola Roxon said that Nursing Home assaults had increased by 50% in 12 months and sexual assaults jumped 36%. She expressed horror at this explosive jump in reported cases.**

**The Department of Health & Ageing was notified of 1411 alleged assaults in Nursing Homes in 2008/2009, according to a report tabled in Parliament last year.**

*Our mother will be included in the figures for 2009/2010. We were devastated when we received a phone call from the Nursing Home where our Mother resides to be told that a male Personal Care Worker had been stood down for inappropriate behaviour. This occurred on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2009. The Personal Care Worker is no longer employed at the care facility.*

*An investigation by both Department of Health & Ageing and the Police was carried out following complaints to each of these departments by our family. No charges were laid; this individual may well be committing similar sexual abuse in another Nursing Home or private home, because we were unable to have him removed from this field due to no governing Regulatory Board for Personal Care Workers. **There is no organized body to deal with such disciplinary action.***

*It is now our priority, to lobby as hard as we can in this current climate of Health reform in Australia and the probability of Federal and State Elections later in the year, to have Personal Care Workers Registered on a National Registration Board. We realize many Personal Care Workers are working in Nursing Homes and caring for people in their homes for the right reasons and they are special people working in a difficult and under-valued area.*

*There is to be wide sweeping changes in National Registration for all Health Professions due to take effect on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010. Communities Australia wide, need a National Registration Board for Personal Care Workers. Mr Rudd's recent sweetener of 739 Million to aged care to better support older Australians is wonderful. The assumption/hope being that the private sector will take advantage of the Zero Interest Rate Loan and build more facilities. **The one thing we can all be assured of is the appalling Nursing Home assaults and sexual assaults that are widely reported in the press will be set to explode; how sad.***

On the 21<sup>st</sup> April 2010, Senator for Queensland, Ms Jan McLucas stated that Assistant Treasurer, Senator Mr. Nick Sherry and Minister for Ageing, Ms Justine Elliott MP announced the terms of reference for the Productivity Commissioner's Public Inquiry into Aged Care. It was also stated that a recent intergenerational report forecasts that by 2050 nearly one quarter of Australians will be 65 and over compared with 13% today, detailing options to redesign Australia's Aged Care System. *Nowhere in the email outlining the "Terms of reference inquiry into aged care" or "Scope of inquiry" does it mention a National Registration Board for care workers. Nurses must be registered, why not Personal Care Workers? A National Registration Board would be of some comfort families who are faced with this appalling behaviour.*

**"Australia's Aged care system provides targeted, affordable and high quality care, but faced with rapidly increasing demand, it is important to ensure that it is equipped to meet future challenges," Minister Elliott said. We welcome this Public Inquiry and will lobby this Productivity Commissioner's Public Inquiry.**

*In our experience, the majority of the work force staffing Nursing Homes is Personal Care Workers; the ratio of qualified Nurses to Personal Care Workers is another area that needs to be addressed. Aged Care workers, both qualified Nurses and Personal Care Workers need support and improved wages but we must also be mindful of the most vulnerable members of society, those who do not have a voice, the infirm, the very frail, those with Dementia and the disabled. In some cases, the abuse and sexual abuse has continued for years. Nursing Home residents and those being cared for in their own homes need your support to keep them safe as they face this most difficult time in their lives.*

*How we treat our elderly and disabled in this selfish era is both alarming and disgusting. We must recognize their fragility and vulnerability and make their autumn years comfortable.*

*My sisters and I have sent out letters to the Nursing Homes and Care Agencies in our area, Qld Aged & Disability Advocacy, Alzheimer's Australia [local], advising them of our intentions and seeking their support for our endeavour in Lobbying State and Federal Members of Parliament, Aged Care Commissioner, QNU, ANF, and the Productivity Commission to implement a National Registration Board for Personal Care Workers. Your support in advancing this matter would be greatly appreciated. **Our Lobby letter is scheduled to be forwarded at the end of this month and a copy will be forwarded to you for consideration.***

*Our family are hopeful that you will deem our endeavour to have a National Regulatory Board introduced for all Care Workers of significant importance, and will consider bringing it up for discussion during your public inquiry into Aged Care.*

*Thank you for your time.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Margaret James; Gwenda Williams; Beryl Buckby; Wendy Simpkins.*

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Gwenda Williams

*Received  
19/5*