

10 June 2010

Productivity Commission
Level 28, 35 Collins ST
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Caring for Older Australians Public Inquiry

Yesterday, I registered online my interest. Now, I send you the actual submission.
The supporting material would be made available on request.

The Social Worker of my precinct has encouraged me to bring the matter to your attention.

I would await news from you with interest.

Yours sincerely

◀ Waldemar Niemotko

Attachment

Call for a qualified support group to ageing in place (living independently)

The staggering ageing trend has brought a need to encourage as many seniors to live independently where they are rather than to queue to retirement villages/nursing homes where there are not enough places. Accordingly, they were prompted to use their life time savings, in order to buy a unit and make all necessary technical adjustments internally. The cost of maintenance of communal property, though, is to be spent out of their levies' funds, at discretion of owners' corporations / strata agents.

On too many instances, they find themselves on a collision course with profit minded investors. An affluent person, upon buying a unit, is tempted to upgrade its attractiveness for a better marketing effect. A case made headlines when a Japanese property entrepreneur has convinced a local council to alter use of the premises, something a local journalist has labeled a move in transforming Spit Junction in Mosman into Kings Cross. When in another suburb the local council refused to build a roof top entertainment facility, the NSW State Government has approved the very project to go ahead.

Should an ingenious investor choose to set up a roof entertainment area on the top of a residential block of units, an opposing voice from ageing unit owners can hardly be heard. Strata manager is likely to support a strong party with a bunch of proxies in hand for voting purposes at AGM. Ageing people are likely to feel underdogs and marginalised, whilst their need for a quiet place to live being largely neglected.

Existence of support groups has been officially proclaimed. When the above mentioned problem was brought to attention of the "Diversity & Ageing In Action Forum 2010" on the 10th of May 2010 in the Parramatta Town Hall (Sydney) a myriad of agencies was recommended. However, each of them, one by one, refused to extend a support to a frail, disabled person during an AGM, for one-and-half hour.

The view prevails that seniors are generally categorised as "asset rich and cash poor" which makes them ineligible for a free Legal Aid service. A hearing disability would frustrate a telephone consultation. Not all of them are computer literate in order to access online a free legal information. An expensive hiring of a solicitor to come to a meeting would look outrageous, resulting in social isolation in the neighbourhood. CTTT would, probably, not allow for a legal representative of that calibre to plead in a strata case.

The call appears to be urgent for a qualified support group that would act for ageing in place, to the benefit of their continued living independently.