



Submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Australia's Aged Care System

Prepared by Vasey RSL Care Ltd – July 2010

In reference to the Caring for Older Australians Circular distributed on 27 April 2010 we are seeking to lodge a written submission as requested by the Productivity Commission.

Vasey RSL Care Ltd (VRSLC) was formed in July 2004 by a merger of Vasey Housing and RSL Care. VRSLC provides care for 425 residents over seven residential sites in metropolitan Melbourne, 500 Independent Living Units and a Community arm that has 166 Community Aged Care Packages. VRSLC employs approximately 390 staff.

Our mission is to provide high quality, sustainable accommodation and service options that facilitate mutual support and meet the needs for security and dignity of the ex-service community. Residential accommodation is offered as a priority to war widows and veterans, with applications from the general public most welcome. There is a strong emphasis on fostering an environment of camaraderie and support within VRSLC.

We seek, through this submission, to bring to your attention an area that lacks substantial funding and thereby impedes our ability to effectively provide services to the ex-service community.

Veterans and War Widows are considered a Special Needs Group under the Aged Care Act and thereby requiring special and specific care yet there is no associated additional funding to provide for these special needs.

Our staff are aware that within the veteran community there is a diverse range of experiences in how war or conflict has impacted on people. Many veterans exhibit behaviours that will never be identified through the most rigorous of assessment processes and post traumatic stress disorder is common and often long standing amongst veterans. Additional training in understanding the provision of care for the veteran community is provided on an ongoing basis for our staff. There is no associated additional funding to provide for this.

Residential and Community Care for war widows and veterans

Vasey RSL Care Group

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Sir William Hall Hostel Heidelberg
Vasey House Bundoora
Waratah Lodge Hostel Sandringham
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Patron

Professor David de
Kretser, AC
Governor of Victoria

VRSLC is very respectful of veteran commemorations throughout the year. All residential facilities and the Day Therapy Centre hold veteran commemorative services including ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day, Victory in Europe (VE) Day and Victory in the Pacific (VP) Day. Our clients are invited to participate and comment that they feel comfortable in a culturally accepting and supportive environment and experience a real sense of camaraderie. Transport & safe facilitation of veterans and war widows to ANZAC Day marches is a priority for VRSLC but comes with a significant cost both financially and in human resources. There is no associated additional funding to provide for this.

The youngest of our World War 2 veterans are in their mid 80's and many of the men were Japanese prisoners of war. Sadly due to their war experiences and the associated effect on their health, we are now experiencing a rapid increase in the number of war widows seeking services and support. There is no associated additional funding to provide care for this special group.

In conclusion, we thank you for the opportunity to share some of our experiences of caring for members of the ex-service community and ask that you consider the substantial costs involved in the provision of care for this special group of people who have sacrificially served our country.

Janna Kocherginsky
General Manager – Residential Services