

To Productivity
attention till now

or into aged care

Having received the draft report into aged care there is one thing that concerns me greatly. There is a deal of discussion on the need of consumer driven changes etc; this is commendable and could be argued the single most important recommendation.

However there is little evidence that the commission has actually followed its own "best practice" advice. Let me explain:- in the list of submissions there are few individuals compared to the number of "industry related" submissions. No matter how well meaning they may be people from the industry are NOT the consumers referred to. They will generally and understandably argue for basically "more of the same on a slightly different plate PLEASE"

I suspect that the majority of individual submissions also came from outside the target group. My reasoning is this; experience has taught me it is very unwise to speak out publicly against any system that is likely to have control of your future. Many many older persons would be unable to or afraid to put in a formal submission for fear of repercussions. However should the commissioners get out there incognito and talk to individuals.??

My own research points to a vastly different scenario than what is currently being proposed. With staying for life in ones chosen community as the most desirable aspect. This could be achieved much more economically, in emotional, cultural, health [mental and physical] and economic terms IF the emphasis was on the well being of people rather than the profitability or otherwise for the select few!!

That IT was not considered expedient for all age pensioners and mature age allowance recipients to be told of the commission and given opportunity to comment is disappointing and means that many of the people who will be directly affected still know nothing of the enquiry.

It needs to be realized that once the ravages of illnesses such as senile dementia, stroke, parkinsons etc have exacted their toll people become things, vegetables etc to those who never knew them for who they really are! Humans being human one can never legislate to force anyone to consider a stranger to be anyone but who they perceive them to be NOW.

That is the most compelling argument I know to assist people to remain for all of life in their community.

To achieve that there would have to be a radical rethink of the whole system of caring for older people. Like from the concept of handing them over to the care of others rather than society being actively involved. That people should become almost invisible on the scale of things once no longer employed, ready to be willing slaves [volunteers] for anyone who needs them but unable and unfit to be gainfully employed until they need to be given over to zoos for keepers to look out for their needs. To an intergrated community based approach to the well-being of ALL its members.

There definitely NEEDS to be a system that is affordable and allows / encourages older people to remain in and part of their community for whole of life and especially when it is not advisable/ possible to remain in their own home. Without that we as a society become less humane and greed, selfishness and associated cruelty become virtues to be admired,

Frailty, thoughtfulness, care etc to be despised and sent to a separate area apart from REAL SOCIETY.

What is needed is smaller local facilities where volunteers are appreciated and rewarded where coin does NOT take precedence over care and where the community as a whole are expected to carry responsibility for their own.

I have worked in a number of aged "care" establishments and visited even more and know that what you see has little relationship to what you get if you don't have regular visits from family and friends, especially if there is limited funds. If complaints are made:- In almost every instance personal criticism of individual and or their family will be made to muddy the issue and intimidate. The institution doing any investigation will invariably give more credence to the establishment than the complaint of family [which can be dismissed on the grounds they have "vested interests".] Usually complainant will never be given a right of response to any criticism made against them.

Local establishments with local people able to look into problems would mean more accountability at less expense. Staff will soon be identified in the local community for their genuine qualities. And frequently rewarded accordingly.

Accreditation as it now is ; much more about show than actual care. There is years notice of visit, months of exact dates; even the times and unit is known in advance. Given that the accreditation team are strangers who have no vested interest in the outcome. To my knowledge they never spend time alone with the clients and in any case would be only those "approved" Even staff rosters can be changed to give the best advantage.

Members of local boards etc even have to be "Industry approved" You know what;- even the worst establishment can give a fair showing under those circumstances! If they didn't it would have to indicate that someone just didn't want them to continue in the industry.

Political correctness may work well on paper unfortunately in reality it never did or can.

HOWON EARTH does the commission think they can recommend a system that is basically what the community/ clients need or want when 90% of their research has been done with industry representatives either present, making the submissions or determining who can?