

State Government Gags VCAT

The State Government of Victoria, in cohesion with its Department of Human Services, is determined to get their way in changing the cost, and the cost structure for the residents of DHS group homes - changing it from democratic to despotic with no appeal process.

Having lost their outright, but covert, demand for the residents of their group homes to pay towards their support costs (support staff wages and associated overheads), they are now doing the same by stealth and power over people.

The residents under attack by this state government have been paying their way, like the general community, through a good, fair and very transparent payment process called CERS, since the early 90s.

Suddenly, out of the blue, in August last, came a very vicious attempt to impose on these residents a very covert payment process generally called B&L, or “residential charge and services component” in the Disability Act 2006 - with significantly increased costs masked by the covert and bundled process.

This is a process which the residents of non-government group homes have been suffering for years - which their service providers, and provider peak body, are too much in fear of the DHS to make an effective challenge.

Having lost the first cash-grab in VCAT, the Minister was determined to try another more sleazy angle this month. The angle is to push the B&L process without the extra cost - without the 75% of DSP fee hike. Then, add the extra cost, the fee hike, gradually over time, until it is within the amount prescribed in the Disability Regulations 2007 - 75% of the DSP.

The Minister is, nevertheless, determined to grab some cash right away. She wants to first get her hands on federal money – the CRA (Commonwealth Rent Assistance).

This minister is also determined to keep VCAT out this time. Saying, “*VCAT must dismiss applications to review, (a) cost of living increases, (b) the CRA and (c) charges which are within the amount prescribed in the Disability Regulations 2007*”.

In the long term, this all adds up to being little different than the Minister’s first cash-grab in August, when she openly admitted the cash-grab would be used to fund other government services.

Whereas, in total contrast, the original intention of the NDIS was, and we hope still is to totally fund the support service costs for the assessed needs of people with disabilities to have the quality of life care and support they need and desire.

There has never been an intention that people should pay for, or pay towards their support service costs! Their only commitment on the residents of group homes, is that they pay their way for daily living - like general members of the community.

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NOTE: We are always interested in feedback and information; general, specific, good or bad.

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