



MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 25 November 2014

Shocking abuse of disabled people in privately operated homes

The shocking abuse of disabled people in privately operated homes exposed in last night's Four Corners program has further alarmed thousands of NSW families.

The program detailed horrific sexual assaults inflicted repeatedly upon numerous disabled clients in Victoria. Complaints were ignored, whistleblowers targeted.

Here in NSW, tens of thousands of some of our most vulnerable people are terrified at the Baird Government's plans to privatise ageing, disability and home care services (ADHC).

The move is set to cause chaos in the disability sector, says the Public Service Association.

Relationships between clients and carers take years to build - they are like family - but union surveys show up to 60% will leave the industry once privatised.

"Thousands of workers will resign rather than be forced into the private sector," PSA Assistant General Secretary Steve Turner said.

"ADHC provides the bulk of services and looks after the vast majority of clients with high needs. They require a lot of support and that is expensive."

"Will a private operator provider give them the same level of service and care if it's not profitable for them to do so? The State Government cannot guarantee that level of service will be replicated."

Kenthurst mother Ingrid Pickering says her intellectually disabled son Michael's violent outbursts were too much to cope with.

He was rejected by every non-government organisation because they just couldn't handle him," she said.

"Our house looked like Swiss cheese. He punched holes in every wall. I was being hit constantly. My husband was being hit. He head butted me and broke my nose, broke my front teeth."

Michael, 30, now lives in a state run home where he has built strong, happy relationships with carers.

KEY FACTS:

- Thousands of families are deeply distressed by NSW Government plans to privatise disability services or basic community care services from 2015.
- Ageing Disability and Homecare (ADHC) is the biggest single provider of disability services in NSW making up 40% of the sector.
- ADHC provides disability and home care services to around 90,000 clients, including the bulk of specialist, high-needs services.
- It employs 13,823 people - 10,516 permanent, 987 temporary and 2,320 casual.
- Public Service Association surveys show system will be gutted by privatisation - around 50% ADHC workers will leave the industry.
- The NSW Government and ADHC have so far failed to provide a commitment to protect services or jobs for people affected.