



15 June 2017

Media Release

'Queensland Advocacy Incorporated supports the call for regulation of restrictions in aged care'

Queensland's Office of the Public Advocate has called for strict regulation and monitoring on the use of restrictive practices in aged care. Queensland Advocacy Incorporated supports this call. Restrictive practices are any sort of criminal or tortious trespass on the person.

Restrictive practices such as physical, mechanical or chemical restraint, containment and seclusion unfortunately have been widely used in Queensland and throughout Australia. In Queensland, since 2006, these practices have been regulated in government funded disability services through the *Disability Services Act 2006* (Qld).

'Self-regulation of the aged care sector is a joke' said Queensland Advocacy Incorporated Director Michelle O'Flynn.

'Currently, there is nothing to stop an aged care provider from using personal restrictions as a way of saving costs and improving operational efficiency' said Ms O'Flynn.

'Many people in aged care - and bear in mind that I am talking about someone's parents, siblings, aunts and uncles - cannot speak up for themselves. They are too frightened to speak up, or maybe they have an illness, impairment or condition that makes it difficult or impossible for them to protect themselves. Maybe they are afraid that they will be moved, punished or worse if they speak up' said Ms O'Flynn.

'Aged care providers can just tie people up, ply them with drugs, lock them in their rooms, or leave them in the shower or bathroom for hours, and right now this is unregulated and not monitored. These things can, and do, happen every day around Australia and more often than not this is because of cost savings or ease of management. We must stop warehousing people and expect that aged care providers will care for our loved ones as we would.' said Ms O'Flynn.

'Without a regulatory framework, aged care providers have a free rein. We would like to see these practices eliminated, but our experience is that elimination can only happen once we know the extent of existing practices, and, more critically, once service providers learn to apply these practices as a last resort, for the shortest possible time, and only when an administrative tribunal or court says so.'

Aged care provision is a big and competitive business. In addition to sanctions, providers can expect people to vote with their feet if they want to live somewhere safe and free of restraint, but even that is not enough to safeguard the most vulnerable.

Ph: (07) 3844 4200 or 1300 130 582 Fax: (07) 3844 4220 Email: qai@qai.org.au Website: www.qai.org.au

2nd Floor, South Central, 43 Peel Street, STH BRISBANE QLD 4101

QAI endorses the objectives, and promotes the principles, of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Patron: His Excellency The Honorable Paul de Jersey AC

'Providers should offer no excuses for using these practices, but we know that they do. Queensland Advocacy Incorporated wholeheartedly supports the Public Advocate's call for regulation.'

Michelle O'Flynn

0481381528