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Media Release - For immediate release

'Let's make an end to institutional living'

'The only appropriate response to the 4 Corners story last night is for the Commonwealth, states and territories to take decisive action to close down institutions built to warehouse people with disability' said QAI's Director Michelle O'Flynn.

'Abuse and cover-up: when will government and service providers make the changes that they know need to happen? It is incredible that management appears to have turned a blind eye, but complaints should be heard and heeded. It only requires a few people to do nothing for abuse to thrive. This can't have been overlooked. Where was the supervision and monitoring? Vulnerable people should not have to be the ones to keep drawing attention to abuse' said Ms O'Flynn.

'This is not just a case of one or two bad apples. Group homes and other institutions force people with disability to be passive consumers. Abuse would be much less likely if people with disability were calling the shots' she said.

'People with disability are just too vulnerable when they have no choice but to accept congregate living arrangements that breed predatory behaviour'.

'We have been calling for an end to shared care for decades. People must have a choice about who they live with' said Ms O'Flynn.

'The participants in our 'Renaissance' forum in July this year attested that their quality of life improved drastically once they put institutional life behind them and they were able to live independently. They became employees and business owners instead of inmates, people instead of patients' said Ms O'Flynn. 'They are not beholden to their supports and services'.

'It's time to put an end to the idea that it is okay to lump people with disability together and keep them out of sight and with no say in their lives. Queensland has its own Yooralla - the inquiry into the Challinor and Basil Stafford Centre near Ipswich exposed horrendous abuse. But that was just the tip of the iceberg. Challinor was closed more than a decade ago, but we still have a long way to go before all Queenslanders with disability are free of institutional living – be it a boarding house, group home or hostel or large residential facility. It is time for a national inquiry' said Ms O'Flynn.

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