

RASAID

Ryde Area Supported Accommodation for Intellectually Disabled

For Immediate Release

10.20am, March 1st, 2010

Lynch Lies and Plays Catch 22 With Ageing Carers of Intellectually Disabled

The parents of a group of intellectually disabled adults in Sydney's Ryde area are horrified that Paul Lynch, the NSW Minister for Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC), has denied he ever gave in-principal approval to their innovative plans for supported accommodation for their 20 sons and daughters.

According to an article in today's *Sydney Morning Herald*, <http://bit.ly/bUkaRC> "Mr. Lynch told the *Herald* the plan would be considered once land was available. '... I did not give in-principle support to the RASAID proposal, as the land has not been secured and there would be numerous other steps which would have to be undertaken.'"

He also denied signing his name in the air after he'd given Jenny Rollo, now President of RASAID, verbal support of their plans. Ms Rollo says there were several witnesses to the aerial signature, at least one of who is prepared to swear in a statutory declaration that her version of events is correct. The others are members of the NSW Labor Party or employed by Minister Lynch. Commenting on this "signature" to Ms Rollo and another RASAID mother on the day it occurred, Lynch's aide said, "If Minister Lynch wants this to happen, it WILL happen."

But worse than being called a liar, Ms Rollo is outraged that the minister says the group's model would be considered once land is secured. "He's set up a Catch-22 situation," she says.

Land owned by the NSW Department of Health in the Ryde district was identified as being available to RASAID in early 2009. At a meeting on June 16th 2009 between senior bureaucrats from the NSW Department of Health, the NSW ADHC, RASAID and the NGO chosen to build the project, an acre of land was to be offered for this project.

"The senior bureaucrat from ADHC told us at that meeting that even if our cluster housing was built, there was no guarantee that all, or in fact that any of our children would go into it because of the department's Vacancy Management Policy. The plans of the land were then removed from the table, literally and figuratively," says Ms Rollo.

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ADHC's Vacancy Management Policy stipulates that the department decides who goes into what available beds in NSW, rendering RASAID's plans for an intentional community for its adult children with intellectual disabilities impossible.

Undeterred, Ms Rollo and another RASAID mother wrote to Minister Lynch, asking for him to meet with them and to override ADHC's policy to allow their proposal to go ahead. The minister refused a meeting and said, via his staff, "We have no further developments to advise RASAID on at the moment."

On November 2nd last year, four months after the original meeting when the land was to be offered, Ms Rollo received confirmation via the ADHC that the Department of Health land was still available for their project.

"It beggars belief that he now says he'll consider our proposal once land is secured. Land can't be secured unless he makes an exception to his department's policy. It is that alone that is preventing the land from being offered," says Ms Rollo.

RASAID is calling on Premier Kristina Keneally to step in and remove the bureaucratic barriers that are preventing RASAID's development from going ahead.

RASAID's supported accommodation model falls within ADHC guidelines for a cluster development to house intellectually disabled people. The model proposes that RASAID's sons and daughters live together within the Ryde area, with their friends, near their families, day programs and work placements. The current system for housing intellectually disabled adults who can no longer live with their ageing or dead parents is ad hoc. The state meets only 7% of supported accommodation needs of adults with intellectual disability.

RASAID members are in their 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s. The oldest parent is a single mother, aged 87, still caring for her 51 year old son.

~~~~End of Release~~~~

**For all media enquiries and to arrange interviews with Jenny Rollo and other RASAID parents, please contact Teresa Russell on 02-9807.9693 or 0400 00 23 49**

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For more information about RASAID, please see our website <http://www.rasaid.org.au>

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# RASAIID

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A RASAIID family, Dick, Marilyn and Robbie Jones, was recently featured on *Four Corners'* program, *Breaking Point*. This is a sample of the families the minister is hurting with his Catch-22 policy web. <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/default.htm>