

SUBMISSION # 10
13, 22

10 February 2005

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
Attention: Ms Prue Goward

Fx: 9284 9611

Dear Dear Ms Goward,

Firstly, may I thank you for that wonderful speech you delivered on the ABC yesterday (probably a repeat) on the Telstra forum. I am so guilty of viewing your role as a token of the Prime Minister to pacify us minorities in society.

I have never heard anyone in my 46 years reflect the many hats I wear in my life, congratulations on your true understanding and reflection on the complex homefront in the new millennium.

On a lighter note, you are the only person I have ever heard have a relative with the same name as my grandmother, Zippora (sorry about the spelling I never met her, my father would have been 105 today).

The reason for my fax is obviously a chord that you struck with me personally, that is about daughters being left to care for their aged parents, alone. Yes I am guilty of having 3 absolutely useless brothers and have carried the load for 20 years. Having the audacity to have my 2 babies as late in my breeding cycle as possible I finally, thinking the hard yards were taken, placed my dear old mother in care upon the birth of my 2nd baby last year.

Well they tell you no-one will ever take care of them as well as you do but my Lord nothing prepares you for what an uncaring society we have become. I never want anyone tell me Australia is a Christian based society again, that is a privilege for past generations that earned the tag. This is where your address (although full of spot on reflections) fell short. I cannot believe the contorted mess that lies in front of me every night is my dear old mother. What is the point of taking both forms of power of attorney if bureaucrats ignore your wishes.

My mother is dying, yes we all die, and most would say they cannot believe my mother has endured so much to this point, but what gives bureaucrats the right to ignore family wishes and condemn people to absolutely agonizing deaths in our wonderful intelligent society today. Hazel has been a paraplegic for over 20 years and has all the complications that result from such lack of movement. She picked up an MRSI at RNSH many years ago which is one hell of a nasty situation, especially with an open wound like a super pubic catheter. I have slayed that dragon for many years despite much opposition from the hospital. Even referring it at one stage after her doctor refused to treat her to Bob Carr's office which referred me to the Sexually Transmitted Disease consultant to the Premier (if you can believe it, not a place you would think would help our grannies). Her opinion was adamant that we are a more compassionate society, and thus she must be treated.

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Upon placing Hazey in her first nursing home 1 year ago, they broke her leg, left her lying in bed for three days then sent her to RPA which they formed the opinion that because she could not walk and had dementia she fell through the guidelines and they could not mend her broken leg and sent her back to the home on morphine. I knew instinctively that with a nasty break with one jagged edge about to break through the skin, gangrene would set in and the leg, in not too long a period of time would be taken off. So I employed a personal physiotherapist to monitor the situation. Well it wasn't too long before she was shipped back to RNSH with the bone seriously close to breaking through the skin. Thank the Lord, a beautiful young orthopedic surgeon said you can't leave her like that, slipped her into surgery on a quiet Sunday and had her back in the home on the Wednesday.

During this ordeal I got the opportunity to move mother, not realizing you needed a referral to do so, luckily the social worker at RPA had done this for me. Because you know of course Hazel's broken leg just happened you know just frail old bones, but no-one wanted to talk about her blacked toe nail and huge black bruise on her rib. I was happy the leg was mending that is all that matters.

The opportunity arose to move her, it was a long way from home. I am at St Leonards and she would be at Wahroonga, but I felt better care was the issue. Well here we are 3 months later, her newly acquired pressure sores have become infected, Hornsby hospital felt that there was really no point in curing her infections she had so many complications that it was best to let her go. Now I made it quite clear to the treating doctor and the so called "fascist Aged Care Liaison Officer" that yes I knew Hazel was dying but I did not want her to die of infection taking over her body and they agreed that her comfort was the main factor here. The officer insisted that she not have her antibiotics and I made it very clear that I wanted them to continue and speaking to the Doctor I said infection burns and aches she does not need anymore of that.

If she had stayed in hospital with intravenous anti biotics she would have been cured by now, but I know how hospitals hate nursing home patients tying up the beds that should be saved for drunken young louts littering the streets doing crazy things to themselves (especially at Hornsby when I arrived at 1pm) so I agreed for her to be returned to the home on syrup antibiotics with the agreement that the Dr would track the bacteria. Well it's a week later and the fever is a violent shaking form and I became curious why it had not broken, I rang the hospital only to be given the same stupid result that I had to deal with a million times before with the MRSI, the lab had not isolated the bacteria, which means we do not know if it is resistant to the antibiotics, lazy medicine and at the very least the laboratory in my humble opinion is just wasting tax payers dollars. Well it gets better.

Hazel was returned to a room in the home which was no less than 40 degrees, an asbestos alcove receiving the afternoon heat every day and an air conditioner that hadn't worked for three months and even now that they have had it fixed after I complained to the Dr it just points strait out to the hall way. So I have gone every night to give her my electrolyte fluids, but last night I was appalled to be told the nurses had taken upon themselves not to give her anti biotics.

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Well yes if you give morphine straight into her canular and she instantly falls asleep it would be difficult. I gave it to her before her morphine with absolutely no trouble. As with the fluids I constantly give her with her syringe during my vigil. Last night I had a stand up argument with the stand in Dr at 8.30p at night. He'd worked late and his daughter was leaving for university and he was not going to stand there and argue with me. When I informed him ok where done, he suddenly wanted to talk, he'd already told me to get another Dr, Mum's Dr will be back from holidays on Friday. Then when he pressured me for what I understood from our conversation I told him I understood that my mother's rights and mine were being ignored and there were avenues to address this, well that attitude suddenly changed and we said goodbye cordially.

They are saying she is acutely dying, so as a war widow and an ex-serviceman herself she is entitled to palliative care for one month, obviously if she was getting it I would not have to leave my family every night to ensure her comfort, and travel for hours into the night on public transport alone. I asked that she be sent to Greenwich hospital which was close by and I could walk, this was denied, I told Hornsby Hospital I did not want the infection to overtake her body yet nurses took it upon themselves to play God.

If my mother's experience can help change the system in anyway then this is a good thing, if not again it was a wonderful address, I hunger to hear more of your thoughts on the public forum. The Christian right frightens me, you on the other hand seem to be a lone wolf for the family.

I hope I didn't take up too much of your valuable time.

Yours sincerely,



Ruth Wells
Just a caring daughter

NB I HAVE ASKED TO VIEW HER FILE AT
THE NURSING HOME & BEEN REFUSED