

**Australian Family Paints a Glowing Picture of UK
Services for People with a Disability and their Families**
Channel Seven's Sunday Night says Services in Australia are Shocking
Sunday 15 November 2009

An Australian Television Program Producer moved his family to the UK earlier this year because he was sick of battling for the under performing support services here in Australia for his son who has autism.

<http://www.lisainc.com.au/userfiles/file/Family%20moves%20overseas%20to%20obtain%20rights%20based%20services.pdf>

The little credible help there is in Australia, has been a long time coming, and is no thanks to the Federal Government. The politicians have all but turned their backs on people with autism spectrum disorder and their caring families.

Out of sheer desperation, and having hit a brick wall in Australia, Dr Kevin Maxwell moved his family to the UK. He says there is recognition, responsibility and a role by law that the UK local authorities provide intensive early intervention therapy for children with autism spectrum disorder at no cost. The very few similar services in Australia cost around \$30,000.

All day, every day, Kevin's son receives what Australia failed to deliver-intensive therapy by pro-active and very caring service providers - the UK local authorities.

It is Australia's shame, that Australia cannot do it like the UK. Intensive early intervention is few and far between in Australia, and the Government funding level is a scandal, Dr Maxwell said.

LISA Comment: Although most of the services in Australia for people with a disability are "hand-out" rather than "rights" based, we consider increased government funding is only part of the answer to meaningful quality of life services. Much of the difference between UK and Australian services is attitude.

Providing the meaningful care which Dr Maxwell says his son is receiving in the UK, requires staff chosen on their ability to treat the person for whom they are providing care like their second family. Or like the Victorian Auditor General says:-

In 2007, about 94 per cent of DHS staff had a Certificate IV qualification (compared to DHS's estimate of about half at the time of the last audit). Many CSOs we audited did not have a minimum qualification requirement for their staff. Instead, they chose staff on the basis of their attitude and ability to provide support rather than [minder] care."

Nevertheless, parents who are getting meaningful intensive early intervention therapy for their member with autism, by whatever means, should consider, at present, parents do not live forever, and the level and quality of care in many group homes, and similar, is far from compatible.

This means, the meaningful intensive ("Active Support") therapy practices are not reinforced throughout the person's life, if they find themselves in such circumstances as a group home, or even respite. The Victorian Auditor General also said:-

"In most DHS and CSO houses we audited, funding and work arrangements did not readily allow for staff to care for residents individually. Staff were often under pressure to complete basic care tasks in the time allotted."

Tony & Heather Tregale

LIFESTYLE IN SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION (LISA) INC.

Tel: 03-9434-3810: Email: vk3qq@optusnet.com.au

Web: www.lisainc.com.au : www.lisa-aus.blogspot.com

NOTE: We are always interested in feedback and information; general, specific good or bad. By telephone, Email or our Lisa Inc web site. Or, if you wish anonymously: Our mail address is 73 Nepean Street, Watsonia, 3087.