

“WALK THE TALK” or “TALK THE WALK”

We are all aware of how skilled most politicians are in question avoidance. Question Time in the Federal Parliament is a classic of this.

Disappointingly, this too hard basket technique extends to most public servants - The Department of Human Service, Disability Services being no exception!

The department spends a large percentage of its budget in “talking the walk”, not “walking the talk”. It has a wonderful shop window to the public, but little ability or motivation to implement this for the real practical benefit for those it is intended to serve – people with a disability.

The department’s document (Fact Sheet 12) entitled, “Providing Feedback and Expressing Concerns” is a classic example of the wonderful shop window of, “Look how good we are!”

This fact sheet says:-

“From time to time it is important to provide feedback to any service, whether it be about something you think is done particularly well, or something you feel could be done better.

Good communication is critical to the process of providing feedback and particularly expressing concerns. It is healthy to raise and talk about concerns as early as possible.

Act quickly. Tell someone about the problem as soon as possible. The earlier you let someone from the service know the earlier it can be resolved.”

Yet most residents and their families who raise concerns or complaints get the departmental royal-run-around and manoeuvre every which way

to avoid the concern or complaint. They can do this, as they have a captive market! No one can chose their service provider, because the department has total control of the DSR (Disability Support Register) for the whole of Victoria.

Most residents and their families give up attempting to raise complaints or concerns due to the department's traditional ability and immense resources to do little more than "Talk the Walk".

"The physical representation of institutional care may have changed, but the institutional attitude is still there! The department will diligently search a complaint for ways to issue avoid on it, especially if the complaint/concern is about an "obvious to everyone" failure to implement the direction, intention and spirit of care policies, standards and values at the service point".

If anyone has any doubt as to the department's ability and intent to "Talk the Walk" not "Walk the Talk", we have wall to wall documented evidence!

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