



“Scratching our Head?”

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If a government minister in parliament quotes the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities to support his government policies is it reasonable to expect he is factual ?

Or should we assume, selective reporting?

If he is not telling the truth is he misleading parliament?

In recent weeks there has been numerous online reports of Ministers, quoting the UN Convention to attempt to justify their policy decisions and hose down disability sector disquiet.

There have been further reports including high level disability advocate presentations to government committees also quoting the same Convention to support their positions.

The AFDO has been reported as having asked the government to limit future disability accommodation choices?

Such rhetoric belongs in the 1980's in our opinion and shows a lack of vision by the AFDO. The debate now should be about delivering choice.

The NSW Government has also made claims around the closure of Stockton citing the UN Convention as its defence option?

We **do not** understand some of this as some claims do not seem to be actually supported by the UN Convention in the context quoted.

The problem is that the UN Convention, as we read it (and it is written in very simple language) does not actually appear to support the policies being promoted.

When quoting the UN Convention at best these speakers could be opportunist or idealistic and at worst they could be accused of misleading.

Limiting accommodation choice by policy or legislation is clearly a breach of the UN Convention.

Article 19 could not be clearer if it was painted in 6 foot red lettering on the wall of every Parliament House in Australia.

"ARTICLE 19, 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities Living Independently and being included in the community"

"Persons with disability have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement."

Now that seems pretty clear does it not?

No cut and paste, no distortion, just a concise but broad directive.

- Why is it then that parliamentarians think they should legislate away people's rights to choose?
- Why is it then that options that parliamentarians try to legislate for consumers should be restricted or limited?
- Why do some advocates continue to demand the government legislate away personal choice to enshrine others views?
- Why are not all accommodation options available to people with disability as the convention dictates?
- Why do so many consumers, if the options offered are so good, so strongly object to the choices being offered to them?

If you have not read the convention the above link will assist

There is still a long way to go to genuinely provide a disability system that delivers full and unencumbered choice to all Australians with disability.

David Holst

Chair - Disability Speaks Steering Committee & Chair, Intellectual Disability Association of S.A (IDASA)

Mob. 0418 555 683

Web. www.disabilityspeaks.com.au

Email. disabilityspeaks@internode.on.net



www.everyaustraliancounts.org.au



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