

## Newsletter No.2 December 2006

This is the second in a series of newsletters that provides updates on the implementation of *my future my choice* - a joint Commonwealth-State Government initiative that aims to provide better living options for younger people with a disability living in, or at risk of entry to, residential aged care (RAC).

The first newsletter, released in October 2006, outlined the *my future my choice* objectives, who can get assistance, the types of assistance available and how the initiative will proceed.

### **my future my choice launched in Bendigo**

*my future my choice* was officially launched in October 2006 in Bendigo by the former Minister for Community Services, Sherryl Garbutt. The event was also attended by the then Minister for Aged Care Gavin Jennings, National Director of the Young People in Nursing Homes (YPINH) Alliance Dr Bronwyn Morkham, Healthscope Manager Cathy Lengyel, residents, families, friends and carers.

The launch coincided with the celebration of the first person to move out of RAC under *my future my choice*. Peter, a 44 year old with an acquired brain injury, was supported to move into a house in the community in Bendigo that he now shares with three other people closer to his age. Peter is pictured below with his sister Maria, Minister Garbutt and Bronwyn Morkham.

'This is much better because you've got more in common, we can relate to each other's stories,' Peter explains. 'For me, in 10 or 20 years, we'll still have each other because it's like a family'.

Peter's sister Maria has been involved with the YPINH Alliance. She is delighted with Peter's move. 'Peter has settled in well and is very happy in his new home,' Maria said. 'We're relieved that Peter is somewhere he feels is the right place for him'.



### **All younger people living in residential aged care receive information on my future my choice**

In October 2006, all people under the age of 50 years who were permanent residents in RAC received a letter and information about *my future my choice*. Those people who have entered RAC since October have also received information.

This information was also made available to aged care providers and services, peak organisations, community service organisations and other stakeholders, and made available on the Internet at [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/ds/myfuturemychoice](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/ds/myfuturemychoice)

### **Individual planning and assessment**

All people in RAC who are under 50 years at 1 July 2006 and meet eligibility criteria will be contacted again in January 2007 and offered the opportunity to participate in individual planning and assessment. This process will occur between February and July next year.

The Summer Foundation has been engaged by the department to develop the planning and assessment framework, including tools and processes. This will be completed in January 2007. For more information on the Summer Foundation, see [www.summerfoundation.org.au](http://www.summerfoundation.org.au)

A submission process is currently underway to identify suitable organisations to conduct individual planning and assessments. These organisations will receive training in implementation of the assessment framework and will begin by contacting younger people in RAC in February 2007.

### **Supporting younger people to participate**

An important principle to guide the implementation of *my future my choice* is that support and advocacy will be available to assist people to participate in the planning and assessment process.

Two types of support will be available:

1. individual advocacy
2. support for individuals and their families to understand the planning and assessment process and alternative living options.

### **Advocacy**

Advocacy support will be available to those people who need it to participate in the planning and assessment process.

Younger people in RAC have a range of support needs that are met by a range of people. Some will have informal supports, such as family members and friends, who can assist them to participate and make informed choices. Others will have formal supports, such as a legally appointed guardian. There will also be some people who will benefit from formal individual advocacy support to assist them to participate in the planning and assessment process.

Individual advocacy support will be provided via a central organisation that will identify a suitable advocacy provider. Action for Community Living Inc. Consortium (ACL) has been engaged by the department to provide this role. ACL will direct the individual to an advocacy service that is appropriate to their individual needs. An individual's planner/assessor will assist with this.

### Supporting individuals and families

The department will fund an organisation to provide information to support individuals and their families to participate in the planning and assessment process, including an awareness of alternative support options. This will allow individuals and their families to become familiar with the process, and access more information on the range of support and living options possible. This will also enable individuals to make informed decisions about their living preferences.

### RAC briefing session

The department will provide a briefing session for RAC services currently supporting people aged less than 50. The session will provide an opportunity for services to hear more about the planning and assessment process and to raise any issues that may assist in commencing the process.

This session will be held at 50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne on 6 February 2007, from 2.00-3.30 pm. RAC services can RSVP to Sarah Biggs by telephone on (03) 9096 7257 or email [myfuturemychoice@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:myfuturemychoice@dhs.vic.gov.au) before 25 January 2007.

### Service planning and development

A range of service models and accommodation options will be funded under *my future my choice* for those people who choose to move to alternative accommodation. This may range from smaller homes to larger services for people with high clinical care needs who require access to nursing care 24 hours a day.

The department has recently called for submissions from service providers for the provision of a 10-bed service for people with high clinical care needs. An announcement regarding this service will be made early in the new year. This service will be located in inner Melbourne and will be operational in 2008.

### Think tanks

A series of forums will be held during 2007 to provide advice on best practice and innovative approaches to service provision for younger people with disabilities in, or at risk of entry to, RAC. This will inform the department and the Advisory Committee about the implementation of *my future my choice*. It is anticipated that the first forum will be held in late February in Melbourne, and will focus on service delivery options. One further forum will be held in Melbourne, and two will be held in regional Victoria later in the year.

### Minimising new admissions

Work has commenced to minimise future admissions of young people with a disability into RAC. This has included consultation across department program areas of Aged Care, Health and Mental Health, and with external organisations including aged care providers, ACAS managers, hospitals and rehabilitation services, disability support providers and other stakeholders. This work will progress over the next few months to develop a policy position on who is 'at risk of entry to RAC' and a process to minimise the number of new admissions of people younger than 50 to RAC.

### Further information

The Disability Services website has further information: [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/myfuturemychoice](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/myfuturemychoice)

To receive future copies of this newsletter, please send your email address to [myfuturemychoice@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:myfuturemychoice@dhs.vic.gov.au)

If you wish to discuss your personal circumstances, please call the Disability Intake and Response Service on 1800 783 783 or TTY 1800 008 149 and ask to be connected to your regional service.

General enquiries can be directed to telephone: (03) 9096 8724.