Younger People in Aged Care Alliance

7 October 2003

Dr Sev Ozdowski
Human Rights Commissioner and Disability Discrimination Commissioner
Level 8, Piccadilly Tower
GPO Box 5218
SYDNEY NSW 1042

Dear Dr Ozdowski,

The Younger People in Aged Care Alliance Queensland (YPACA) is a diverse group of individuals and organisations who share a common agreement that it is inappropriate for younger people with disability (0-65 years) to be placed in aged care facilities. This option denies young people with a disability the right to enjoy a life in the community.

There are 1,223 people with disabilities under the age of 65 living in aged care facilities in Queensland (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2001). The number of younger people in nursing homes has nearly doubled in the last decade and is likely to grow. The intent of the Commonwealth Policy on *Assessment and Entry to Nursing Homes and Hostels of Young People with Disabilities* is that younger people should only enter an aged care facility as a last resort. YPACA is concerned that this last resort has increasingly become the only resort.

Institutions, including nursing homes, are not appropriate places for people to live, as outlined in Disability Services Queensland's own stated vision for people with disability, the Commonwealth Disability Services Acts (1986) and the Queensland Disability Services Act (1992). The Alliance is increasingly frustrated by the lack of commitment by both Commonwealth and State Governments to provide other options.

At the National Conference on younger people in nursing homes in Melbourne on 16 and 17 June 2003, YPACA endorsed a national call for a public inquiry. We believe that the issue of younger people with disabilities being placed in aged care facilities is a human rights travesty. Therefore, YPACA calls for the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission to conduct a public inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Sandra Kalms
(on behalf of the Younger People in Aged Care Alliance)
Ph. (07) 3368 3055
PO Box 470, Paddington Qld 4064