

Patricia Conci

I am writing on behalf of 150 intellectually disabled adults who attend St John Accord, Churinga in Greensborough.

In 2002 there were approximately 85 clients attending on a daily basis. In 2004, numbers had increased but are unknown to me. At this time parents were called to a meeting to discuss the future of the site and the attending clients. They put it to us that the existing buildings needed 11 million dollars spent on a total upgrade, or 17 million dollars to bulldoze the lot and build an entirely new facility on a parcel of land in the front of the old buildings. By pulling down the existing building they proposed to sell off the land for housing. Therefore, that money would pay for the building of a new centre.

Time went on and nothing was done. Now there are 150 clients attending but only 60 people remain on site on a daily basis as there are not enough rooms for everyone to remain on site. Clients are sent off site on a too regular basis, mainly to troupe around shopping malls, and doing activities elsewhere. The place is now totally dilapidated and requires major funding to get it up to scratch. Occupational, Health and Safety are big issues for staff and clients. There are frequent staff turnovers. The pottery section used to be a hive of activity, with not only Churinga artists using this facility, but also clients from outside the Churinga community. There is no pottery on a Friday, anymore due to staffing shortages.

What the powers to be of Churinga propose to do, is to break up the entire population into zones, and have them attend transition centres, where they go to of a morning, then they are bussed or taxied out when they get there to partake in other activities, somewhere else in the community. As the mother of a 34 year old, I know how confusing and disruptive this would be on her and many of the others that attend Churinga. They need constant routines, have ongoing contact with their friends and also continuity with regular staff members.

Churinga is nestled in beautiful natural bush land, where the atmosphere is tranquil and restive, and for the clients attending leaving this would be just catastrophic. If these clients had a decent facility, it would attract greater interest

in Disability careers, creating an even better environment for those who attend. They certainly deserve it.

Apparently, the parcel of land that they discussed turning into a new facility now has a caveat from Vic Roads.

What I am asking of you, is your help in getting our voice heard, and many voices make a loud noise.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Conci

Go to Parent
Jim Pilakis

Churinga CEO Tony Hollamby

Heather Mates
Transition Manager