



The needless deaths of people with intellectual disability must be urgently addressed

PO Box 199
Rundle Mall Adelaide 5000
P 08 8226 8652
F 08 8226 8620
E info@hcsc.sa.gov.au
W www.hcsc.sa.gov.au

10 February 2017, Adelaide, SA

Steve Tully, the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner (HCSCC) for SA fully supports the comments made by the NSW Ombudsman yesterday about the University of NSW study that revealed the shocking truth:

Australians with intellectual disabilities are significantly more likely to have their lives cut short. A flawed classification system too often attributes the cause of death to their disability, whether they die of pneumonia or an ear infection.

People with intellectual disabilities were twice as likely to die a potentially avoidable death as the general public, found the largest Australian study of its kind.

The research published in the British Medical Journal Open also found adults in this group died on average 27 years earlier than other Australians (54 versus 81 years old).

<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/7/2/e013489>

The Commissioner said:

Although the study was based in NSW I am confident that the results would be similar in SA.

The voices of people with disability and their loved ones are too often ignored or silenced.

I see many cases where the safety and quality of services for people with disabilities is generally below the expected standards.

I believe there is often a chasm between what is written in services' policies and what services are actually delivered

What is the Commissioner doing?

As well as dealing with individual complaints and systemic investigations, HCSCC's focus is to engage with people with disabilities and their loved ones to inform them of, and enable them to exercise their rights, provided in the HCSCC Charter of Rights: http://www.hcsc.sa.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/h_know_your_rights_a_guide_to_the_hcsc_charter.pdf

HCSCC has two projects under way: 1) Less Silence More Safety and 2) Aboriginal disability rights outreach. Please view the 4 powerful DVDs that give voice to people with disabilities experience s:

<http://www.hcsc.sa.gov.au/less-silence-more-safety-project/>

HCSCC has commenced work with SA Health to improve the safety and quality of services for people with disability in the health system. The work will focus on the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care new national standard: Comprehensive Care Standards. See pages 36 - 45 for an overview of Comprehensive Care Standards: <http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/DRAFT-National-Safety-and-Quality-Health-Service-Standards-version-21.pdf>

Contact:

[Steve Tully, Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner \(SA\)](mailto:Steve.Tully@hcsc.sa.gov.au)

[Phone: 82268633](tel:82268633)