

14 January 2015

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Ms Deborah Glass OBE
Victorian Ombudsman
Level 1, North Tower
459 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

By email: ombudvic@ombudsman.vic.gov.au
disability@ombudsman.vic.gov.au

Dear Ms Glass,

Re: Ombudsman's review to investigate disability abuse reporting

I write on behalf of the Board and staff of Yooralla to assure you of Yooralla's full support and cooperation during the investigation into how allegations of abuse in the disability sector are reported and investigated.

The ABC Four Corners program focused on incidents that occurred three years ago.

Following those incidents, a review was conducted by Brian Joyce. That review resulted in 20 recommendations that were translated into 106 actions.

An external independent audit company, HDAA, was asked to review Yooralla's implementation of the actions. At the conclusion of this audit, HDAA declared that the program was now being fully implemented and that all actions were rated as "actioned and achieved".

Further more, HDAA conducted an independent staff survey which demonstrated that the majority of staff made very positive responses to questions relating to the responsiveness of the organisation to client safety, health and wellbeing.

In November 2014, Yooralla underwent its triennial recertification audit, also conducted by an independent, government approved auditing company, SAI Global. The audit was conducted against both the DHS Disability Standards and the National (Commonwealth) Disability Standards. Positive comments were made about the changed culture of continuous improvement; feedback from clients was overwhelmingly positive and the organisation has been assured of achieving recertification.

Yooralla would be pleased to have the opportunity to describe how the transformational change was implemented and is being embedded.

The changes that have been implemented include:

- Enhanced training for staff on safe guarding clients rights
- Training for staff on being confident to "speak out"
- Training/support for clients to speak out
- Enhanced recruitment processes
- New, electronic, incident reporting system (Riskman)
- Revised investigation processes

- Enhanced policy framework including specific policies on safeguarding rights
- Enhanced risk management framework
- New compliance framework
- Enhanced quality and clinical governance framework
- New strategies for meaningful engagement with clients, parents and families
- An Independent Advocacy Advisory Group (reporting to the Board Quality Committee)
- Board approval to establish a Consumer Advisory Committee
- Enhanced skills on the Management team, including the appointment of a Chief Practitioner and a Director of Health and Wellbeing
- New performance reporting framework
- Charter of Human Rights
- Enhanced customer survey process
- New organisational values, translated into expected behaviours.

The following attachments accompany this letter:

- The Joyce Report (confidential – and redacted to protect the privacy of clients and staff)
- The HDAA audit final report
- The HDAA audit staff survey results
- The two recertification audit reports
- Embedding safeguarding rights practice instruction
- Embedding safeguarding rights summary of progress
- A list of Yooralla's key policies associated with safeguarding rights.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Sherene Devanesen
Acting Chief Executive.