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11th June, 2014

Submission IPART Review NSW Trustee and Guardian Regulation 2008

Since September 2007 I have been the Legal Guardian and managed the affairs of ██████████ a young woman, now 36 years old, who has Down Syndrome. ██████████ is unrelated to me but I was a friend of her foster mother and as her Minister [Glebe Community – Baptist – Church] and following the death of ██████████ foster mother and in the complete absence of any other competent person in ██████████ life I became her Guardian. This relationship was suggested and encouraged by then DADHC Managers and Officials who had come into ██████████ life following the death of her foster mother.

My appointment as ██████████ Guardian is on a fixed term with regular review – currently a five year term Sept 2011 – 2016. This includes all areas of ██████████ life – Medical, Accommodation, Financial etc.

As a Guardian I was informed I was required to submit annual Accounts to NSWTG office. ██████████ is only in receipt of Centrelink benefits and lives under 24 Care in a Group Home managed by a N.F.P. Charity. She attends a day programme 4 days per week at a facility run by another N.F.P. Charity. I see ██████████ weekly and attend to many of her needs outside the home – shopping, medical and other health care appointments and some social activities. Over the years ██████████, who is the same age as some of my own adult children, has come to be regarded as another member of our extended family.

I first submitted ██████████ Accounts in 2008, a task which was time consuming – requiring me to rewrite all her bank statement Credits and Debits twice and make account for these for the full year. I was astonished to be charged \$100 by the NSWTG for them to have reviewed my work – a task which possibly would have taken a maximum of 15 minutes, given that I had supplied photocopies of all relevant papers and done all the cross checking and tabulations necessary. I wrote to the NSWTG expressing my unwillingness to pay \$100 of ██████████ money to an organisation supposedly charged with assisting her in keeping her money safe. I had done a good job of this – as the accounts showed – making NO charges against her accounts, although I was often out of pocket [petrol money, parking fees, lunches etc] as I tended to ██████████ needs. I received pretty much a form letter at that time stating I HAD to pay these fees imposed. This \$100 fee continued until 2012.

Following the submission of the 2012 Accounts I received an invoice for an additional fee of \$17.15 – this being a newly imposed “Income Fee” I made a caustic comment on the invoice which I sent with my payment. [I had neither time nor energy to waste on another letter.]

In 2013 this Income Fee had skyrocketed to \$111.70 an increase of over 600%. Once again I wrote a caustic remark on the Invoice as I paid a bill of \$211.70 – the equivalent of one month’s “pocket

money” for [REDACTED] – for what??? Apparently to spend 15 minutes reviewing work which is repeated year after year with NO appreciable differences.

I was pleased to receive in February this year a letter and Accounts Form which gave me the option of taking part, for this year, a “trial of a brief form of accounting for selected private managers” – I note with relief I no longer have to painstakingly reproduce twice the annotated Bank Statement.

Since [REDACTED] affairs are indeed simple and low level I wonder that we need the services of the NSWTG at all. I note with interest that informed the NSWTH office on 7th May of my change of address but that two pieces of correspondence since then – dates 16th and 28th May - have both gone to my old address and taken some time to find me.

I object firstly to an annual charge of \$100 to review forms as presented – a task I imagine takes approximately 15 minutes.

I strongly object to an income based charge to do effectively NOTHING at all from year to year as [REDACTED] affairs are managed with great care by a Private Manager who has made no call at all on NSWTG – I would much prefer that a “Fee for Service” regime be instituted, whereby those needing assistance, when financially able, are asked to pay for such services as required.

For NSWTG Clients who rely on Centrelink Benefits and have no private capital assets I would prefer to see a pro bono advice service being offered as needed to the least able members of our society.

Thank you for accepting this Submission, I look forward to further news of your Review and its Outcomes.

Rev Julie Brackenreg

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