



Legislative Assembly for the
Australian Capital Territory

Select Committee on Social Policy

Submission cover sheet

Inquiry into Petition 017-25 and E-Petition 005-25: Closure of Burrangiri Aged Care Respite Centre in Rivett

Submission number: 12

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From: [Christine Johnston](#)
To: [LA Committee - SP](#)
Subject: Submission to the inquiry into the closure of Burrangiri Aged Care Respite Centre

Submission to the inquiry into the closure of Burrangiri Aged Care Respite Centre

As someone who has previously worked in Commonwealth Public Service for approximately 20 years and also worked more recently in the aged care sector, I am making a submission to this inquiry as a voice of someone who actually has some idea of the consequences of closing the Burrangiri Aged Care Respite Centre.

Minister Rachel Stephen-Smith stating that respite is available in aged care facilities is laughable. I doubt that she has even looked at the number of available beds vs the number of people that require respite. She has no doubt been provided some numbers by the department that may show there are places, but the general public know that the reality that we have to deal with is far different to numbers that a department provides. From my understanding the Minister did not even visit Burrangiri prior to this decision being made.

Rachel Stephen-Smith meeting with Katy Gallagher regarding securing funding to build a new facility is quite frankly a photo opportunity that means nothing. It does not guarantee that funding will be available, and even if it does eventuate it will be a long time coming. Add to that the time that will then be required for approvals, the tender process and then the actual build, we are looking at many years down the track. Where do these people go in the meantime?

The people that use the Burrangiri Aged Care Respite Centre are people that are living in their own homes or with family, supposedly best practice and cost saving for the taxpayer – and something the government is encouraging people to do. That is a commendable goal, and one I fully support, but for this to become the norm there needs to be respite in place for circumstances that occur when the aged person needs that little bit of extra care – or quite frankly, the families need a short break.

This appears to be another situation where a government has made a decision without actually thinking of the unintended consequences of what this closure would mean. More people will require access to a bed in an aged care facility, meaning they will not be remaining in their own homes or with family. Families will decide that this is the best course of action because there is no respite to deal with the required care after a hospital stay, so will decide that they have no choice but to place their loved one in an aged care facility permanently in the event that hospital stays occur more frequently, which sadly happens. Too bad if there are no places available, as is often the case waiting for a concessional place...or if they simply can't afford it.

Rachel Stephen-Smith stated that Burrangiri is not 'fit-for-purpose'. Sorry to be pedantic, but it is more 'fit-for-purpose' than nothing! Have you been to hospital lately? There are no 'ensuite' bathrooms in hospitals unless you are a 'private' patient in a private room – and that is definitely not guaranteed! Bathrooms are shared with the others in the same hospital room as you....and more often than not these can be mixed male/female as sometimes that is all that is available. How is that any better than the services provided at Burrangiri? Again, I don't want to be pedantic, but it is definitely not. And if the building is to be repurposed, money would be spent making it 'fit-for-purpose' for whatever group

you may want to house there. Spend that money doing an upgrade (as you seem to deem required) until your new federally funded facility opens! I am sure that would cost less than keeping people in hospital for weeks on end waiting for a place in an aged care facility.

The day centre that operates at Burrangiri is also a much needed resource for the community, again providing respite for carers in the knowledge that their loved one is in a caring facility and is being kept safe. Again, there is not enough of this resource elsewhere.

There is much more that could be said, I just can't believe that this is actually happening. I do not care that Rachel Stephen-Smith says that aged care is a federal funding responsibility! Sort that out before closing something that is required by our community!

As a Labor voter in the ACT for my whole adult life (and I am well over 60) I am absolutely disgusted with the way this has been done with total disregard for community. I feel that the ACT government has stopped listening to the needs of the community. You need to stop taking us for granted!

Christine Johnston

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