



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: 11

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [LA Committee - SP](#)
Subject: BURRANGIRI RESPITE CARE CENTRE
[REDACTED]

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I am submitting these comments for your consideration

I am writing to express my deep concern about the projected closure of the Burrangiri Respite Care Centre in June this year.

The reason given is that the facility is 'not fit for purpose' which is curious when the Health Directorate's Asset Management Plan has shown no major problems with the structural integrity and confirmed that it meets the standard for aged care respite. The question of the standard of the building is even more spurious when a number of other uses have been suggested including as a Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Facility.

Burrangiri is over 35 years old and does not have an ensuite for every one of its fifteen rooms but it has managed to operate as a heavily relied upon respite facility since its inception. 'Not meeting community standards' is another shallow reason that is provided for this sudden decision. What evidence does the Government have that 'the community' is demanding a higher standard of bathroom access for respite care? When people are seeking respite care it is often at a time of great emotional stress and desperation and bathroom facilities are the least of their worries. Many elderly people have toileting issues and an ensuite is no guarantee that other staff assistance will not be required during the night. Burrangiri has managed to cope quite successfully with this for the past 35 years. There are other dedicated respite rooms in Canberra that have shared bathrooms and it is hoped that they are not also scheduled for demolition.

We are told that the 5,000 bed nights per year which is *half* of the ACT's respite beds will be provided by other facilities but anyone who has sought emergency respite care can attest to the fact that increased demand has meant that there are fewer places available. Many aged care facilities are stating that they no longer have respite beds available. Is an exhausted and stressed carer to be left to ring around Canberra and the region desperately looking for accommodation for their loved one as though they are trying to book a kennel over the Christmas holidays?

This decision seems to be completely lacking in any concept or consideration of the human factor. These are vulnerable and sometimes confused elderly people with caring and worried families. Burrangiri has always had the reputation of being a caring and supportive environment for both residents and relatives.

For the Government to refuse to review this decision, especially in the light of a \$10 million injection of Commonwealth funds for respite beds in the ACT, shows a harsh callousness that will not be easily forgotten by many people in the community.

These people will become out of sight, out of mind and the result will be over exhausted carers struggling to continue to cope without any respite and increased costs as they also end up in the health care system. Instead of convalescing in Burrangiri, some patients will have to stay in a hospital bed at greatly increased expense to the system.

This decision is not only brutal and heartless on those who depend on Burrangiri but it will also result in greater financial costs to the community.

I am hoping that the ACT Government will rescind this decision as soon as possible and relieve the enormous stress and anxiety being experienced by those people who are currently accessing Burrangiri and to those who are yet to become aware of how precious this facility will become for them.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Richardson