

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Wimmera Mail Times, 28/11/08, p.20

Prader-Willi

SIR: THE Mail-Times article about the Prader-Willi support campaign was a very good summary of the anguish the Scott family has endured over many years in not receiving the necessary support they need to care appropriately for their sons who suffer from Prader-Willi syndrome.

It is most encouraging that the Department of Human Services has now agreed to fund services for Stephen but this is just a start and much still needs to be done for this man.

Importantly, appropriate supported accommodation must be found.

Through their annual report this year Community Visitors supported by my office have called on the government to provide appropriate support in the community for people with a disability who do not belong in nursing homes or other restrictive environments, and people with a mental illness who no longer need acute care.

The lives of people such as Stephen are being severely compromised by a serious lack of this accommodation and of specialised support for their complex needs.

Their human rights to liberty and freedom of movement are at risk.

It is not a sufficient get-out clause to say these services do not exist. They need to exist and a just and fair society must ensure it.

Victoria's new charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities outlines these basic rights of all Victorian citizens including our most vulnerable. It is up to us all to defend them.

Colleen Pearce
public advocate and chairwoman
of the Community Visitors Board