

Meeting of Disability Ministers

Despite an angry start to the proceedings there was a more hopeful outcome to the recent meeting of disability service Ministers regarding the CSTDA. The July 25th meeting brought Ministers from the States together with Minister Mal Brough from the Commonwealth. As usual they were met by a strong delegation of people with disabilities and family members. NCID and VALID representatives took the opportunity to present their issues face to face.

Chief amongst our concerns was the Federal Government's withdrawal of its offer to match unmet need funding in the States 50/50, and the States tardiness in finalising their offers. We called on the States to get their act together and we also called on Minister Brough not to play pre-election political games.

There were angry exchanges prior to the meeting as NSW and Queensland Ministers clashed with Minister Brough in the lobby. Fortunately there was no repeat of April's walk out and this meeting at least attempted to advance the negotiations. A communique was issued at the end of the meeting (see NCID's response over leaf).

One of the most dramatic developments was Minister Brough's threat/promise to "*assume responsibility for funding and managing accommodation services for people with disability over the age of 40 living with parent/carers over the age of 65 who are receiving inadequate support*".

While our initial reaction was that this is a political pre-election stunt which lacked detail and practicality Minister Brough was keen to convince us that this was a genuine effort to address a particularly vulnerable segment of the unmet need population. We are therefore holding off our response until we see the detail of the Federal Government's proposal which was promised to come in the form of a letter.



Kevin Stone, VALID E.O. (left) discussing concerns with Minister Mal Brough (right)

Because we are moving into an election environment we thought it was important to present the alternative government's policy on the CSTDA and other disability matters. (See attached excerpts from the recent Labor Party conference).

For further information on CSTDA developments please note the following websites:

CSTDA Alliance	www.cstdaalliance.org.au
VALID	www.valid.org.au
NCID	www.ncid.org.au



Parents Matt (77) and Dawn (74) Dunlop with daughter Gayle (50), concerned about the future of accommodation services are hoping for the light at the end of the tunnel!