11 April 2013

Boarding House Reform
Law & Justice Directorate
Aging, Disability and home Care, Family and Community Services
Level 4, 83 Clarence Street
Sydney NSW 2000

To: RIVERVIEW HOSTELS

Overview

Wilma Laruffa established Riverview Hostels in 1967 and remains a director along with daughter Tania Sylvester. While Wilma maintains an overseeing role in Riverview, the majority of the operations are conducted by Tania and Michael Sylvester, along with 16 other staff members.

Riverview consists of 7 individual cottages and 1 larger building. The seven cottages are solely accommodation, while the larger building is accommodation and administration. Staff are on duty 24 hours a day. Management also live on site and are directly linked via phone/intercom for emergency situations.

All cottages are fire approved with measures in place such as approved internal fire linings, smoke & thermal detection and 24 hour monitoring by external parties. Maintenance on our fire detection system is maintained regularly and our staff attend training courses each year.

Committed to the safety and security without impeding the privacy of our residents is a high quality surveillance system comprising of 13 cameras, and adding as budgets allow.

All staff at Riverview are carefully selected, with criminal history checks carried out and first aid certificates are mandatory.

Riverview management welcomes the employment of New South Wales Trustee and Guardian Board to assist with residents financial needs when needed. We also support any resident to manage his or her own finances.
The Future

The options presented in the draft that are best suited to Riverview are Option A, followed by Option B.

Option C poses difficulties, in particular

- maximum of 30 persons
- single rooms
- Call buttons in the suggested areas
- Medication distribution

Options C and D would terminate our business over time.

Riverview would experience difficulties in some key areas of implementation of Option C and D. We would request that we be provided with significant funding in order to comply with the immediate changes that are required such as the roll out costs of on call buttons, enrolled nurse and additional administration staffing. You will see in our attachment that Riverview would be in a loss situation when we implement these changes.

The decrease to 30 residents is not a viable option for Riverview due to the structure and size of the existing premises.

Conclusion

Riverview is an important component in the Assisted Boarding House sector and has always provided a safe and secure home environment for people within the disability sector. It is a unique model and needs to be looked at on this basis. There is no comparative centre to Riverview. By adopting the draft regulations our model would be destroyed and ultimately our business. We ask that the Aging, Disability and home Care, Family and Community Services take this into account when finalizing the regulations.

If Riverview is to survive the implementation of such a Regulation we urge the committee to provide generous funding to assist us to meet the new requirements.

We have attached figures to show the impact that the Draft Boarding House Regulation 2013 may have on our business.

Yours Faithfully

Riverview Management

Wilma Laruffa

Tania Sylvester

Michael Sylvester