

## COMPLAINT IN RELATION TO VISITOR RESTRICTIONS

[REDACTED]

By John Powell

On behalf of Sydney Bruce Powell (known always as Bruce) [REDACTED]

Procedure to contact Bruce by telephone:

[REDACTED]

### Background

Bruce had been living at home with his wife [REDACTED] until January 2019 when he suffered a severe stroke. He had a reasonable recovery but it was necessary that he move to an Aged Care facility. Accordingly he moved into [REDACTED] in March 2019. Both Bruce and his family have been extremely happy with the care provided at [REDACTED]

Bruce is not in very good health. He suffers from [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

However he has full mental capacity and spends a lot of his time listening to ABC radio. He is fully conversant with current affairs.

[REDACTED] year old still living at home by herself. She is still driving.

Bruce and [REDACTED] have been married for 63 years. They are very close and loving couple. They have 4 children and 5 grandchildren and have a very close relationship with them all. Prior to the pandemic [REDACTED] visited Bruce on a daily basis usually for several hours. They would just talk for hours, [REDACTED] would read parts of the newspaper to him and she would fuss over his laundry and other requirements. A weekly highlight was watching Hymns of Praise every Sunday and at the conclusion they would discuss the quality of the hymns.

### Visiting Restrictions

On 18/03/2020 visitor restrictions were introduced, initially for 2 visitors once a day for a short period in the resident's room. On 27/03/2020 these restrictions were tightened to 1 visitor each day with set visiting hours and no longer than 30 minutes.

At 2.30pm on Thursday 2/04/2020 an email was sent advising that as at 5pm the following day a total lockdown would be imposed. Obviously [REDACTED] was extremely upset at the limited notice and given the indefinite timeframe both Bruce and [REDACTED] were concerned as to when they would next see each other.

Since that time, the arrangement is that Bruce will ring [REDACTED] at 1pm when he returns to his room from lunch. I have witnessed [REDACTED] with a number of these telephone calls and it is very sad to watch. The prospect of such a loving couple only being able to communicate in such a manner for the foreseeable future is extremely distressing for all concerned.

## Wedding Anniversary

Bruce and [REDACTED] celebrated their 63<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary on 26 April 2020. Their wedding anniversaries have always been significant events. Milestone anniversaries were celebrated with major functions. Their anniversary last year took place shortly after Bruce moved to [REDACTED] but they still managed to have a romantic dinner together sharing a meal delivered by a local restaurant.

This year I was concerned about the effects of the pandemic in relation to a visit by [REDACTED] I sent the CEO an email on 19/04/2020 advising her of the forthcoming anniversary and asking if anything could be done for them. I was dismayed when she replied on 21/04/2020 with a suggestion that they could have a virtual dinner date. Given Bruce's health conditions such a proposal is simply not workable.

The Prime Minister made an announcement on that same day in relation to Aged Care Visitor restrictions so the family decided that we would wait until we received a foreshadowed email on Friday 24/04/2020 which hopefully would advise that visits would then be in accordance with Commonwealth guidelines.

Unfortunately we were advised in an email only sent at 5.20pm on Friday 24/04/2020 that the lockdown restrictions would be continuing. I had sent the CEO an email at 4.15pm that day attaching an article that appeared on ABC News that day with further comments that the Prime Minister had made on the subject. The CEO replied by email at 6.36pm that day advising that essentially there would be no change and that my parents would be unable to see each other on their special day.

Interesting she stated in that email that the majority of residents & relatives/friends support the decision to keep these restrictions in place and do not want them lifted at this point in time. I would be interested to see if evidence could be provided to support this statement.

After several further emails exchanged between us at 8.28pm the CEO advised that she would facilitate a window visit by [REDACTED] on Sunday. This visit required [REDACTED] to speak with Bruce through a window while outside on a cold and wet Melbourne day.

## Conclusion

Bruce and his family request that [REDACTED] immediately cease the lockdown and enable the resumption of visits in accordance with Commonwealth guidelines.

If [REDACTED] is not willing to make this change then at least please enable loving couples to at least see each other. The enforced separation of these couples (of which I believe there are only 2-3 at [REDACTED] is extremely cruel, particularly at their stage in life and health.

JOHN POWELL

[REDACTED]

PS [REDACTED] is of the generation where you do not make waves and she has been uncomfortable with my actions. She has also been concerned that there may be repercussions for Bruce although I have tried to assure that this would not be the case.

The family wishes to stress that they are extremely happy with the care provided at [REDACTED] The staff are magnificent, particularly with the recent restrictions when they have handled the additional tasks of handling phone calls with their usual caring attitude.