

Submission No.

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BY: LACA

Dear Committee Secretariat

Could I please have an extension of time to submit this document about the legal needs of older Australians. I have only just found out about the inquiry

Yours faithfully

The Guardianship Tribunal discourages solicitors at its hearings. This is surprising considering that the Guardianship Tribunal has the power TO TAKE away all basic and legal rights from individuals, AND their families AS well. They win almost every case that comes before them. All evidence at the hearing is hearsay and accepted from almost anyone. The Guardianship Tribunal, The Office of the Public Guardian ASSIST THE Protective Commission take control of the Assets and income of individuals. Finger pointing hospital social workers often apply to the Guardianship Tribunal for a hearing.

Glossy brochures advertising the Guardianship Tribunal emphasises informality in contrast Guardianship Tribunal hearings are autocratic AND allow very little feedback. Family agreements can be ignored IN favour of the OPC

None of the activities of the Guardianship Tribunal, OPG AND OPC ever has a thorough airing on the media, including the ABC. The ABC has a small amount of coverage on rare occasions. People who are having their houses forcibly sold by the OPC, have been disappointed because the media have refused to publicise the matter, AS the media is gagged by government policy. Jail terms AND Huge fines are the punishment for media exposure

without some exposure, victims who are about to have their house forcibly sold, cannot find any public support, financially or to form Human Rights groups (such as happens with refugees and David Hicks lobby group) The OPC recovers all legal costs if their clients children fight them, opposing the sale of their parents property. As the OPC puts itself legally in their clients shoes, it is like my own parent fighting me back over money. This persecution of clients childrens is intolerable.

The government does not fund the OPC, but it funds itself through fees and charges of clients money, another win for the government. Why should we have to pay the fees and charges because the Guardianship Tribunal choose not put our affairs under Private Management at the last hearing. As these OPC orders are for life it is intolerable that it is so difficult for clients and their families to escape from one of these Financial management orders from the OPC. They have solicitors to oppose any change, and to fight to keep the money in their hands.

Also I fear that the level at which the Guardianship Tribunal is judging people as not be able to manage their affairs has been made too high. This has been deliberately done by the government, so that the OPC has a good chance of benefitting financially. It should go back to the level of competency ~~was~~ the same as before the Guardianship Act of 1997 in ~~its~~ ~~intention~~.