

NDIS specialist accommodation to be prioritised for under-45s in aged care in Federal Government plan

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ALL Australians such as Kirby Littley in nursing homes under the age of 45 — and who are desperate to get out — will be moved into age appropriate accommodation within three years under a major action plan to be unveiled by the Federal Government today.

Social Services Minister Paul Fletcher will detail the national action plan for younger people in residential aged care at a speech in Melbourne. The policy priority involves moving all those people under 45, who wish to leave, out of nursing homes by 2022 and those under the age of 65 by 2025.

Ms Littley, 33, recently moved into a new unit, which is registered as an NDIS specialist disability accommodation place, in Belmont.

She suffered an acquired brain injury after a craniotomy for a brain tumour resulted in two strokes. Ms Littley worked as a teacher before her ABI. She could not be discharged from hospital into rehab as there was nowhere suitable. The only way to access rehab was for her to live in an aged care facility.

Ms Littley and her parents, Carol and Kevin, have spoken about this process and the grief they experienced seeing their daughter in such a facility.

She could not be discharged from rehab into her own home because it was not accessible nor suitable for her needs, so she lived with her parents for three years before moving into her disability-friendly unit.

Her new property consists of four strata-titled units, three designed for high needs residents and the fourth a bedsit suitable for an overnight carer.

The property has been redeveloped to allow people with disabilities to live independently in their own units, but also incorporates an undercover shared outdoor area. Every detail has been considered — from height accessible fixtures to more spacious hallways and kitchen to allow movement in an electronic wheelchair.

Former Geelong mayor Keith Fagg has redeveloped the house and flats on the property into specialist disability accommodation in response to the number of young people who had no other suitable accommodation apart from aged care. Mr Fagg's aim was to make the units available — either for purchase or lease — to provide independent living.

Two of the units are now occupied and there is strong interest in the third.

More than 50 younger Australians with disabilities or high needs are moved into residential aged care a week.

The Government will also commit to halving the number of people under 65 entering aged care within six years under the plan. Mr Fletcher said the plan would be funded under the National Disability Insurance Scheme.