

RUTH MARTIN

Petition

MRS C.L. EDWARDES (Kingsley) [9.07 am]: I present the following petition -

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned, bring to your attention the situation of Ruth Martin and her family.

Ruth's mother is in the public gallery today -

Ruth is a 19 year old young lady with Pierre Robin Syndrome and an intellectual disability. Ruth lives at home with her parents.

For the past year Ruth has been involved in an "alternatives to employment" programme with an agency called Valued Independent People (VIP.) Ruth had a trial at a supported employment position in her last year at school, but this was not successful.

Ruth needs considerable care and support. She has speech, but people who do not know her well sometimes have difficulty in understanding her. She loves to listen to her CD's and sings loudly while doing so. She can start at 6.30 am and continue all day without a break. She requires help with bathing and dressing, and supervision with personal needs.

Ruth's father is 63 years of age. Nine years ago he was diagnosed with a brain tumour which is currently in remission. However, due to post operative complications he suffered a brain haemorrhage. He received further brain damage from radiation treatment. He now has short term memory loss and is unable to work. He is on a partial disability pension as Ruth's mother works four days a week as a teacher to support the family.

Ruth's mother is 54 years old. She is the carer for her husband and her daughter. She is also the only support person for her mother who is in her 93rd year. Last year Ruth's grandmother developed shingles and lived with the family for 5 months until they were able to obtain a room for her in a frail aged hospital. Now she spends Thursday's, her daughter's day off, and part of the week-end, with the family.

The stress of supporting and caring for three people with such immense and different needs is taking a heavy toll on Ruth's mother's health. She is in urgent need of assistance. She has applied for accommodation support funding for Ruth, to allow her to live independent of the family home, SIX TIMES. She finds that the stress of continually pleading for help, only to be rejected time and time again, adds enormously to the pressure she is under.

The accommodation support funding panel has acknowledged that Ruth's family "has significant needs" but is unable to offer the assistance needed. What has to happen to this family before the help they need is made available?

Now we ask that the Legislative Assembly give urgent attention to:

The provision of the accommodation support services needed by the estimated 300 people with disabilities and their families in Western Australia currently unable to access the accommodation support they need.

The provision of the respite services needed by the estimated 950 people with disabilities and their families in Western Australia currently unable to access the respite they need.

The provision of the "Post School Option" services needed by the estimated 800 people with disabilities in Western Australia currently unable to access the support they need to engage in activities during the day.

The petition bears eight signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

[See petition No. 79.]