

## **Account Two**

This is an addendum submission from Women With Disabilities South Australia into the Sterilisation of women with disabilities. The original inquiry was on the 19<sup>th</sup> of February 2013. This was attended by six women (including three from the organising party WWDSA).

One woman who wants to remain anonymous has contacted the Inquiry separately saying she wanted to give her account of her time working in an institution that provides a range of services for people with intellectual disability in the 1980's.

She worked in a range of capacities from direct care through to middle management in the accommodation units and was aware that most of the young women with a disability did not menstruate. When questioning this she was told that the parents had organised sterilisation for their daughters as a safety measure. This was not consistent though as even those girls and women without concerned family did not menstruate.

While working with some older women, in their 30's and 40's there was what was called a vaccination program where women were taken for an injection every 3 months. It is bizarre to think that anyone needs to be vaccinated every 3 months. This was a standard response to direct care workers. Not only was there no informed consent, even the staff who were escorting the resident to the appointment were not informed of the true purpose of the visit.

Later, after progressing to minor management roles, this worker was made aware of a longitudinal study that looked at the effects of drugs like Depo-Provera on women's general health and well being. A number of women died of breast cancer while involuntarily being on that study.

Finally, the worker knew of several incidents where young women became pregnant while under the duty of care of the institution and were forced to have terminations. Some of those women would have been able to rear their child with some support systems but were not ever given that opportunity. There are a number of women who have difficulty accepting what happened to them while so called being under the care of the institution and suffer still from the impact of that.