

The Janefield Investigation: Short Update Report:

It was on the 26th of April 1996 that AMIDA and ARN first met with a person at Kingsbury who said that he wanted to live in the community. A few days later we discussed possible legal action.

On the 22nd July 1996 CASL asked the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) to conduct an inquiry into the new institution at Janefield. The Anti Discrimination Tribunal also made a formal referral to the EOC for the investigation soon after.

In November 1997 the EOC sought submissions on the way in which the investigation should be conducted and the relevance of Court of Appeal decisions. In March 98 'The Equal Opportunity Bulletin Vol. 3, No 1, Autumn 1998' announced the conduct of the Janefield Investigation. The EOC also published a 'General Information Sheet 1' and 'Terms of Reference' in May 1998. CASL and its members made their submissions up until the August 1998 closing date. Little has been heard since. There have been two briefing meetings, the last back in May 2000. At this meeting it seemed that little real progress in the investigation had been made.

The latest information is that a lengthy report is being prepared for the Commissions consideration in November. This report is being prepared by a lawyer, Nina Ananidis, who has been examining the submissions and the relocation files of forty eight Janefield residents. She has also looked at the files of six people who were supported to move into the community. Only a sample of the files has been examined because of their repetitiveness. When she provides her report to the EOC they have to make a decision about whether to accept or decline the complaint. If they accept the complaint then they have to decide if there should be conciliation. Because the affected individuals have not yet been consulted conciliation is unlikely. The Commission has indicated that they would want to consult with the affected individuals about their views, particularly concerning the issue of 'detriment' if the investigation were to continue.

It seems that we will need to wait and see what happens at the end of the year and then make decisions of our own about what to do next.

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