Media release

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Regulator revokes a Supported Residential Service registration

A second Supported Residential Service (SRS) in Melbourne’s West has had its registration revoked by the Human Services Regulator.

Human Services Regulator Director Anthony Kolmus said he took action to protect the health and wellbeing of residents at Sydenham Grace. It followed an extensive investigation that uncovered 23 serious contraventions of the *Supported Residential Services (Private Proprietors) Act 2010*.

“This is the culmination of an extensive investigation by my team to protect the welfare of residents,” Mr Kolmus said.

Evidence collected by Authorised Officers included affidavits signed by current and former employees, residents and their families, and allied health workers, compliance breaches and a forensic examination of records that identified instances of:

* bullying, intimidation, coercion and abuse of residents
* unsafe, unhygienic and uninhabitable living conditions
* insufficient quality and quantity of food
* inadequate provision of personal and health care
* improper storage and provision of medications
* hindering access to NDIS and health services
* opening private mail and forging resident’s signatures
* failing to keep and falsifying records and incident reports
* insufficient staffing and other compliance failures
* obstructing communications between residents, their family members and appointed guardians
* accepting residents unsuited to live in an SRS, resulting in an inappropriate and unsafe mix of residents
* information showing the service is not financially viable to continue operating.

Deregistration of Sydenham Grace follows the appointment of administrators to the facility in January and the deregistration of Gracemanor earlier this month.

Sydenham Grace and Gracemanor share the same sole director. Through its investigation, the Regulator determined the director does not have the relevant skills and knowledge to operate an SRS in a competent and safe manner and is not suitable to operate an SRS on conduct and character grounds.

The administrator, Ernst and Young, will continue to be responsible for the operation of the service until all residents at the facility have been supported to transition to alternate accommodation that best suits their needs.

There are 114 privately operated Supported Residential Services in Victoria. Last year, the Regulator conducted 158 inspections and issued 110 compliance notices to 24 services.

The Victorian Government is further strengthening protections for SRS residents by establishing a new social services regulator. New, stronger powers will mean the independent regulator has more tools to act when providers are not doing the right thing by their clients.

The Regulator calls on the community to support its regulatory oversight of services by reporting any concerns about the operation of Supported Residential Services to srs@dffh.vic.gov.au.

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