

## **Couple say they want to make autistic daughter a ward of state**

**BENOWA, Australia: A Gold Coast couple say they want to make their seven-year-old autistic daughter a ward of the state because they cannot cope with her behavior.**

Primary school teacher Robert Lachlan and his wife, Debbie, from the Gold Coast suburb of Benowa said their daughter, Emma, needed constant supervision, and the strain had pushed them to "breaking point."

"This is not a stunt and it's not an easy thing to do," Mr. Lachlan told The Gold Coast Bulletin. "We have to give her up, she's going to become a ward of the state because we just can't go on."

Emma, who cannot speak, was getting harder to control as she grew older. She banged walls, drew on them, ran away, did not obey instructions and needed constant supervision.

The couple have another daughter, nine-year-old Tiffany, who has a less severe case of autism but also needs constant care.

A spokesman for the Disability Services Minister, Warren Pitt, said the department was fully aware of the case and were working with the family to help them avoid relinquishing Emma to the state.

(Source: AAP, September 19, 2006)