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**From:** Lee Rush  
**Sent:** Saturday, 19 May 2007 11:42 PM  
**To:** Committee, FHS (REPS)  
**Subject:** Inquiry into the impact of Illicit drugs use on families

Standing Committee on Family and Human Services

Terms of reference

1. Financial, social, personal cost - Our 21 year old son, together with five other young Australians is on Death Row in Indonesia after being caught "red handed" with 1.6 kg of heroin taped to his body. We now have ongoing financial costs to for his well being in a foreign jail; social costs as in total disruption to our lives; personal costs as in an undermining of our identity. Blame is bandied around but 19 year olds do not make the rules and are victims as we the family are. Something is seriously wrong when there is so much carnage in the world and non violent Australia citizens are handed to a foreign power to be killed, for what? What price a life?
2. Harm minimisation - first identify the problem and then the strategy. The "silence and secrecy" of illegal drugs makes identification very difficult; current law enforcement procedures make things worse. The illicit drug problem is social, medical (and people in those fields would be best to deal with it) and criminal. A balance among the three is required. The community needs to be continuously educated in a creative and interesting way on the dangers of illicit and legal drugs; what to do; and where to go for help. The issue /impact of illegal drugs has been around for many, many years, so it does not need to go in the too hard basket.
3. Strengthen family - Cease demonising and vilifying victims - the family and the dependent person. Or even worse killing them or imprisoning them . Encourage open communication so the problems are not hidden and can be addressed. Use positive language. For our family we want our son back in Australia in the physical condition that he left here, not in a box with his feet sticking out as happened over twenty years ago.

There are high stakes involved in this inquiry and it is imperative that the recommendations in the final report "get it right".

We wish the committee well and look forward to the findings  
Christine and Lee Rush

21/05/2007