

Standing Committee on Family etc, AOC 2/9/08

Parliament House,

Canberra ACT 2600

21-7-08

Dear

Thank you for your letter of 18th inst. received today. I presume that it is in response to my submission per the Acting C.F.O. of the Schizophrenic Fellowship.

You are free to publish my submission which is as follows.

For over twenty years my son has been affected by what it took the system fifteen years to diagnose and adequately treat as a combination of bi-polar disorder and schizophrenia.

His main problem is that due to impairment of the cognitive capability of the brain he is unable to know that he has a problem which needs medication and so his treatment is by a Community Treatment Order involuntary.

With the assistance of one of my daughters over these years I have been his carer. As I am now unable to keep in contact with him and his clinical managers, my daughter performs that task and keeps me informed about what goes on.

When we first got the C.T.O. years ago after an interview with the panel which decides those matters I complained to the Civil Liberties lawyer on the panel as to me it seemed that the rights of people who could not know that they had problems needing medication should differ from those of people who were aware of their condition.

At that time my son was not as aware of the system as he is now and so the order was put in place without any problems from him. My daughter tells me that he is now resentful of being on an order to take medication which he does not need (his idea). We know that he does need medication and so are in agreement with the order. What has happened now is that I have become his primary carer with the clinic and the doctors.

For that reason I think that what is needed is an intermediary between people like my son and all agencies dealing with them

To M/s

21.7.08

Apropos my submission on the support for carers of the 'mentally ill'. Not for publication but to give you an idea of how the Privacy Act can affect contrary situations.

Over the years many such situations have occurred in the life of my son. The one which I now recount is an indication of the farce. Years ago I took him to the clinic as I recognised his need for assessment, but I ended up being the person needing the psychiatrist. I couldn't understand why that was so and after two visits I told that doctor that the whole system was insane and cancelled my next visit. Then, as I knew would happen, my son went A.W.O.L. We didn't know where he was until he returned one evening and unable to get into the house as we were all away, he proceeded to throw stones and broke several windows. The neighbours sent for the police and eventually another of his rumpless visits to Rozelle. The police decided to put him on an order not to come near the house again (I imagine putting him on such an order) then the order turned up in our letter box (he was supposed to be in Rozelle), and written on the back was what explained to me the reason for me having been in need of a psychiatrist. It was as follows.

At that time I used to spend the weekends looking after this property where I now live, as it was our holiday house. When I was away our eldest son would come to visit my husband. I told him that he could sleep in my bed while I was away.

This is what the younger brother told the case manager, I was then supposed to have a big problem. No mention of the fact that I was 100k away from the place because of the Privacy Act. I wasn't told about what the 'mentally ill' son was saying. All they had to do was to ask about where I was when my eldest son was sleeping in my bed. He would have told them "up the coast".

We had over the years several encounters with what is a stupid system. The last one had the consequence of landing him in St. Vincent's hospital having sustained a broken leg from 'playing chicken' with traffic in Kings Cross.

Thank you, Yours Sincerely