

22 MAR 2006

D06/437

Mr Ian Holland  
Secretary  
Select Committee on Mental Health  
Australian Senate  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Holland

**Re: Senate Select Committee on Mental Health**

Thank you for your letter regarding the submission to the Senate Select Committee on Mental Health by Mr and Mrs Kosowicz concerning the care and treatment of their son Timothy.

While it is not possible to discuss the individual details of the case, the circumstances have been carefully reviewed and it is not considered that Mr Timothy Kosowicz' actions could have reasonably been foreseen.

The NSW Government is committed to the improvement of mental health services and better outcomes for people with mental illness and their families and carers. This is evidenced in the 2005/06 State Budget, which provided a \$71 million, or 9.1%, increase in funding for mental health services. Since 1994/95 mental health funding in NSW has increased by approximately \$500 million, to \$854 million.

This growth in funding is resulting in significant improvements across the spectrum of mental health services. In particular, the following initiatives are currently being implemented:

- In addition to the 283 new funded beds opened between June 2001 and June 2005, around 270 more beds will open by June 2008.
- An allocation of \$12 million has been provided in 2005/06 for the development of new Psychiatric Emergency Care (PEC) units that will alleviate the pressure on emergency departments in the major public hospitals.
- Additional supported accommodation places for the mentally ill are being provided under the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) Program, in conjunction with the Department of Housing and Non-Government Organisations.
- The Family and Carer Mental Health Program is being expanded to provide practical and personal support for the family members and carers of people who use mental health services.
- An additional \$10 million in 2005/06 is being made available for community-based mental health services that will provide additional clinical rehabilitation and vocational education/training, as well as expanded specialist mental health services for older persons and adolescent justice diversion/forensic services.

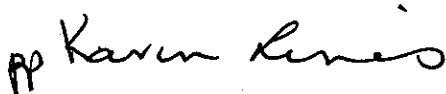
The Community and Court Liaison Service already provides specialist mental health advice to NSW Local Courts. The service provides psychiatric expertise and advice to magistrates when people with mental illness first appear in court. This assists the courts in identifying the mentally ill or disordered charged with minor offences and diverting them to treatment in lieu of incarceration. The service also enhances the linkage between community based mental health services, the courts and correctional based mental health services. In 2003 the service was awarded the NSW Premiers Award in the Social Justice category.

The NSW Statewide Community Forensic Mental Health Service (CFMHS) is the community-based service of the NSW Forensic Mental Health Service. The development of the CFMHS arose out of the need to provide a specialist community forensic mental health service, which would assist Area Mental Health in the care of forensic patients and high-risk mentally ill clients, who do not have a forensic history but are at high risk of offending. The CFMHS is a consultation liaison service providing expert forensic mental health services to Area Mental Health, which in turn provides direct client case-management. The CFMHS also provides a vital link between the various secure inpatient units and the wider community, and aims to collaborate extensively with all relevant stakeholders and improve the delivery of mental health services to forensic clients in an effort to minimize risk to the community and promote the well-being of mentally ill clients.

The focus of these initiatives is to develop a comprehensive and accessible network of mental health services, including the enhancement of emergency and acute units, as well as ambulatory and community-based services.

Should you require further information regarding this matter please contact Dr Karin Lines, Deputy Director – Clinical, Centre for Mental Health, on 02 9391 9307.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karin Lines". The signature is written in a cursive style and is preceded by two short horizontal lines.

David McGrath  
**A/Director, Centre for Mental Health**