

C.A.S.P.

Comprehensive Area Service Psychiatrists Special Interest Group

Chairman: Dr. Andrew Campbell
Secretary: Dr. Alan Rosen
CASP Policy: Dr. Roger Gurr

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Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on Mental Health
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Email: mental.health@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary

Re: Senate Select Committee on Mental Health

We represent an independent network of Psychiatrist Directors and Senior Psychiatrists running and involved in public mental health services in NSW.

We are concerned that mental health services in this state and nationally are underfunded, and in disarray. We believe the National Mental Health Strategy is basically sound, but is seriously underfunded and not being adhered to by the states or the Commonwealth, with few exceptions.

The result, particularly in NSW, but also elsewhere, is that core components of mental health services (eg crisis services, assertive community based services, family interventions, 24 hour supervised community residential care and vocational rehabilitation) are being only partially implemented and are being eroded or actually dismantled in some areas and states. NSW is operating increasingly on an "ambivalent non-strategy", retreating to a "law-and order" driven inpatient bed-focussed fortress psychiatry reinstitutionalization policy, while allowing or presiding over the dismantling of community services.

We consider that the National reforms have stalled, and that we require continual independent monitoring by a National Mental Health Commission like the effective standing commissions in New Zealand and now the Republic of Ireland.

We acknowledge increasing demand for mental health services due largely to comorbidity with substance use and workforce problems.

To address these issues, we attach:

1. Drugs and Australian Government Policies have created a Crisis in Public Mental Health Services – R. Gurr
2. Australia Needs a Mental Health Commission – A. Rosen et al.
3. Reviewing 25 years of 7 day and night per week integrated mobile mental health services in NSW – powerpoint presentation – A. Rosen
4. Who Owns Callan Park – Rosen and Manns.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Rosen
Secretary, CASP

Andy Campbell
Chair, CASP

Roger Gurr
Policy Committee

Attachments as listed.