

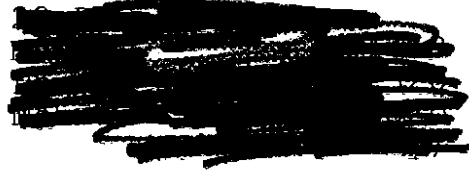
**attention Senate Select Committee on
Mental Health**

to

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

from

A.N. Brooks



11 May 2005

This note is hurriedly sent, I became aware of the extension of time only this week, and decided that I should write again.

From 7.30 p.m. till 8.30 p.m., April 26, 2005, SBS Television showed on the "Insight" program some discussion on conditions in detention camps, the camps holding the "boat people". This referred to the "boat people" and their detention, separated from the general community. The TV program was repeated from 1.00 p.m. to 2.00 p.m. the following Friday, May 1; their normal programming is to repeat, on Friday, their 7.30 p.m. program of the previous Tuesday.

The "Insight" discussion raised the question of whether the boat people, waiting under inhospitable conditions, would show signs of deterioration of mental health. Some of the people in the discussion had seen symptoms of deterioration. One of the persons (who had some professional skills/qualifications) gave descriptions of a number of symptoms which are generally accepted as showing a deterioration in mental health; the symptoms had not been present earlier during the detention.

One of my comments on mental illness is that if a person is living a way of life which they do not wish to be living, their mind tries to escape from those conditions, and the result is sometimes a loss of reality, or other signs of mental health problems.

The descriptions (on "Insight") of conditions agreed generally to a description which was given to me some months ago by a person who had had some contact with a mother and her children, then in one of the detention centres. I, personally, have a very high regard for the integrity of the person who gave me that description.

Enclosed are some photocopies of various kinds which have some bearing on mental health.

Additionally, statistics may show that a high proportion (say, 95%) of people treated [under any of the systems of health care, including those which are not "mental health"] are helped; this is good. But to the few who "fall through the cracks"—are not successfully treated—the outcome is very undesirable, even catastrophic.

It must be emphasised that some "ordinary" citizens believe the stigma of mental health is reducing; it can be more openly mentioned/discussed..

This transcript of my hand-written submission is included here to facilitate understanding of my message; my handwriting sometimes is not quite as legible.

(type - written transcript)
A.N. Brooks
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