

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

Thank you for the extension of time granted to make a submission to the committee.

I am a psychiatric nurse working in a community mental health clinic. I have been working in this field for 35 years. I consider myself just a typical mental health worker, and my views would not be exceptional.

After reading the submissions already published on your website, it is apparent that a diverse range of consumers, carers and professionals are all saying the same thing: that there are many serious problems with all of the nation's mental health services.

Your committee already has a lot to consider. I would merely re-emphasise those areas of others' submissions that I consider of major professional concern.

1 Housing

Without the provision of stable housing for at least most of our seriously mentally ill, many of our other interventions will fail. This is a problem which cannot be solved without many departments being involved. I suspect it may never be solved without direct Federal grants.

2 Co-morbidity

The use of illicit street drugs is a problem which has caught most services unawares. The incidence is high and increasing. Coordination between mental health services, drug services and justice services is very difficult. It has the potential to confound all our other interventions.

3 Ongoing supervision

I have recently re-read the 1874 Royal Commission into the conditions of inmates at the Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum (now "The Park"). That commission found;

Inadequate accommodation

Inadequate nutrition

Restricted services

Poorly trained attendants

An admixture of lunatics, criminals, physical and addictive illnesses.

Such findings can still be seen in our institutions and community settings, today, 131 years later.

There seems to be a longitudinal pattern here encompassing enquiries into mental health services in all states.

Problems are brought to public attention.

There is an enquiry with official recommendations.

Some recommendations are imperfectly implemented, some forgotten.

The situation becomes neglected until the next crisis, enquiry, partial improvement and subsequent decline.

Vincent Marmont
Registered Nurse

Southport Clinic
60 High Street Southport 4215
07 5537 0655

I would ask that the Parliament give consideration to the creation of some form of continuous oversight.

This email, including any attachments sent with it, is confidential and for the sole use of the intended recipient(s). This confidentiality is not waived or lost, if you receive it and you are not the intended recipient(s), or if it is transmitted/received in error.

Any unauthorised use, alteration, disclosure, distribution or review of this email is prohibited. It may be subject to a statutory duty of confidentiality if it relates to health service matters.

If you are not the intended recipient(s), or if you have received this email in error, you are asked to immediately notify the sender by telephone or by return email. You should also delete this email and destroy any hard copies produced.

