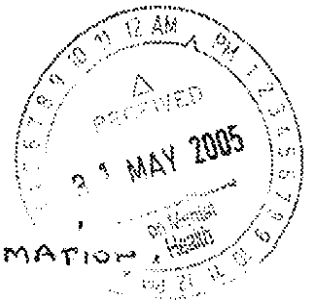
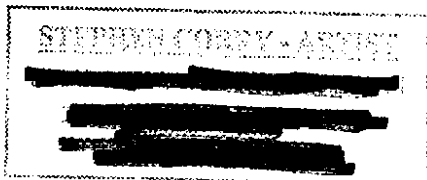




FRI: 27th May 2005.

RE: SUPPLEMENT TO SUBMISSION - GENERAL INFORMATION

DEAR COMMITTEE,

I HAVE ALREADY SUBMITTED AN ACCOUNT OF ONE EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM. I WOULD LIKE TO ADD SOME MORE GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE SYSTEM.

AS A PERSON WITH A RECORD OF PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY SPANNING TWENTY TWO YEARS AS WELL AS MANY CONTACTS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE SERVICES I HAVE A GOOD KNOWLEDGE ON MANY OF THE PROBLEMS, PITFALLS, SYSTEMS OF SURVIVAL AND SUPPLEMENTS TO THE STANDARD TREATMENT. IF I WERE TO RELY ON THE STANDARD TREATMENT ALONE, I SHUDDER TO THINK WHERE I WOULD BE. BEING A PART OF A NETWORK OF MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS OF THE SERVICES OFFICIALLY AS WELL AS UNOFFICIALLY IS OF GREAT BENEFIT TO MY STAYING WELL. WITH OUR COMPARING OF NOTES, SHARING STORIES, SHARING HEALING RELATIONSHIPS AND SHARING INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCES THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF STAYING OUT OF PSYCHIC TROUBLE. WE TEND TO LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER AND HELP EACH OTHER OVER THE HARD TIMES.

THE MOVEMENT OF CONSUMERS IS BEING ACTIVELY AND PASSIVELY SABOTAGED WITHIN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES PROBABLY FOR MANY REASONS AS WELL AS MONEY. THERE WERE THOSE IN THE HIERARCHY OF SERVICES WHO EMBRACED THE MOVEMENT BUT THE MOVEMENT (OFFICIALLY) SEEMS PLAUGED WITH TOKENISM. THERE IS A RELUCTANCE WITH MANY OF THE SERVICES WORKERS AND ALSO THOSE IN HIGHER POSITIONS.

I LIVE WITHIN AN INSULAR SYSTEM OF WELFARE GOVERNMENT HOUSING AND CONSUMER FRIENDSHIPS, BECAUSE OF THE BLATANT BUT LEGALLY UNPROVABLE OR LITURGICALLY UNREACHABLE DISCRIMINATION THAT I HAVE EXPERIENCED WITH MY DEALINGS WITH THE GENERAL COMMUNITY, AS WELL AS LARGE AND SMALL ORGANIZATIONS. THERE MUST HAVE

② BEEN A SENCE OF MY BEING DIFFERENT TO MANY OF THE PEOPLE WHO ARE PART OF THESE GROUPS. HOW CAN ONE HIDE PSYCHOSIS OR HIDE THE KNOWLEDGE OR EXPERIENCE OF PSYCHOSIS TO PEOPLE WHOM ONE IS IN CLOSE QUARTERS WITH?

IN ALL JOBS I HAVE DONE I HAVE EXPERIENCED HUMILIATION, MARGINALIZATION, INSULTS, LIES ABOUT ME, DISCRIMINATION, AND HARRASSMENT. I HAVE BEEN ASSULTED BY OTHER STAFF IN TWO OF THESE JOBS. I EXPERIENCED THESE THINGS IN ALL JOBS THROUGH THE 1980'S. I DIDNT KNOW THERE WERE LAWS TO PROTECT ME OR I COULD NEVER PROVE WHAT HAD TAKEN PLACE. I HAD SOME PROBLEMS WITH COMMUNICATING AS ONE WOULD EXPECT FROM A PERSON WHO HAD AND WAS STILL EXPERIENCING PSYCHOSIS. MY STANDARD REPLY TO THESE DIFFICULTIES WAS TO MOVE ON - TO LEAVE THE JOB - HAVE A REST AND GET ANOTHER JOB. SOMETIMES I WOULD BE FIGHTING THESE PERSONS (OGRS) FOR MANY MONTHS BEFORE BEING FORCED TO LEAVE. ONE GETS TIRED OF FIGHTING AGAINST INJUSTICE ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY SEEM TO GET AWAY WITH IT SO MANY TIMES. THE SUB-CULTURES WITHIN SHELTER AND ORGANIZATIONS OFTEN RULES OVER THE LAW. THIS HAS BEEN MY EXPERIENCE FROM A VERY EARLY AGE IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE AS A CHILD. THERE IS A CRUEL ASPECT TO HUMANITY THAT WILL UNIFY MANY AT THE COST OF OSTROUSING ONE. YOU COULD ARGUE WHERE THE PERSON WITH MENTAL ILLNESS COMES IN THIS.

THE WAYS THINGS ARE ORGANIZED WITHIN THE SYSTEM NOW - TO DO WITH FORMAL WORK, DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING, CENTRELINK, ETC. ONE IS BETTER OFF IN MANY WAYS NOT WORKING AT ALL. YOU CAN PUT IN A GOOD DAY'S WORK AND AS SOON AS THE DEPARTMENTS HEAR OF IT YOU CAN END UP PAYING MORE THAN YOU MAKE DOING THE WORK. THERE IS NO INCENTIVE TO MAKE ONESELF MORE EMPLOYABLE. ONE IS PUNISHED BY THIS. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND CENTRELINK WILL ROUTINELY PRESSURE AND

③ HARRASS ONE TO DO MORE, LOSE SOLIDITY LESS AND CONTRIBUTE FINANCIALLY TO THE SYSTEM. THE SYSTEMS IN PLACE TO HELP CREATE ENOUGH ROOM TO LIVE CAN BECOME PRISONS. TO SAY THAT THE ANSWER IS TO TAKE AWAY ONE'S BENEFITS IS A FOOLHARDY ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM AND WOULD PLACE MANY IN A LOT OF DANGER. THERE IS NO TICKET PRICE PUT ON THE MANY OTHER WAYS MENTALLY ILL PEOPLE CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITY. I WOULD ARGUE THAT FOR MANY AT DIFFERENT TIMES GETTING THROUGH THE DAY IS QUITE AN ACHIEVEMENT AND WOULD EVENTUALLY REGISTER AS PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE LOOKING BACK ON HOW ONE DONE THIS. COMPETENT AND EXPERT PATIENTS OF MENTAL HEALTH DOCTORS CAN TEACH ABOUT THE DIFFICULTIES OF MENTAL ILLNESS AND ADD TO VALUABLE KNOWLEDGE.

HOME OWNERSHIP IS SO RIDICULOUSLY OUT OF THE QUESTION IN MANY MENTALLY ILL PEOPLE'S LIVES. STARTING A FAMILY, HAVING A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP AND EVEN GOING ON A HOLIDAY OR HAVING A WELL PAID JOB IS OUT OF REACH OF THESE PEOPLE. WE CAN SEE THAT THERE IS LITTLE EXIT IN AN ATTEMPT AT HEROIC EFFORT THAT SENDS US UP IN MORE PAIN. THE DEMANDS OF MENTAL ILLNESS JUST TO STAY WELL ARE OFTEN MORE THAN IS ASKED OF MANY WHO HAVE MORE IN STOCK TO MEET SUCH DEMANDS. IN ORDER TO PROVIDE MAXIMUM PRODUCTIVITY AND STABILITY I MUST STAY AWAY FROM ALCOHOL, ALWAYS TAKE ALL PRESCRIBED MEDICATION (EVEN IF IT MAKES ME SICK IN OTHER WAYS) NO ILLLEGAL DRUGS, GET ENOUGH SLEEP, EXERCISE, EAT HEALTHY FOOD, STAY AWAY FROM BAD RELATIONSHIPS ALWAYS MONITOR ONESELF, DON'T ISOLATE, STAY OUT OF TROUBLE AND HAVE SOMETHING TO GIVE CHARITABLY. IT HAS TAKEN MANY YEARS TO LEARN ABOUT THESE THINGS AND HOW TO MAINTAIN THEM. IF JUST ONE OF THEM IS OUT OF ORDER I CAN COME UNDONE VERY QUICKLY. NOT MANY PEOPLE WHO DON'T HAVE MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS COULD TICK ALL OF

④ THE ABOVE ALL OF THE TIME? AND IF A NORMAL PERSON DID SLIP UP, HOW MANY WOULD SUFFER DIRE CONSEQUENCES FOR HAVING DONE SO? MANY IN OUR SOCIETY DON'T SEEM TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE HAND OF CARDS ARE STACKED AGAINST SOME VERY EARLY ON. BEING A SUCCESSFUL PERSON WITH A CHRONIC MENTAL ILLNESS IS A GREAT LESSON IN PERSONAL MANAGEMENT. TO ADD TO A PERSON'S TROUBLE (WITH MENTAL ILLNESS) ~~is~~ IS GOING TO ASK THEM TO COMPETE IN THE WORKPLACE OR THE SO-CALLED EVEN PLAYING FIELD? THOSE WHO ADVOCATE THAT HAVE OBVIOUSLY NEVER BEEN LIVING WHILE HAVING TO TAKE HEAVY ~~AND~~ PSYCHIATRIC MEDICATION. AFTER LONG PERIODS OF <sup>TAKING</sup> TRANQUILLISERS A PERSON IS VERY LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE HAVING TROUBLE WITH SLEEP PATTERNS AND OTHER RHYTHMS OF LIFE. IF THE BAR TO GAINING LIVING BENEFITS IS GOING TO BE PUT HIGHER THERE ARE PROBABLY DEATHS IN THIS POLICY.

LIVING ON THE D.S.P. IS QUITE AN ACHIEVEMENT IN EFFICIENCY AND SELF-CONTROL. THIS TAKES A LONG TIME TO MASTER. THE ALTERNATE BEING PRESENTED BY SOME IS FOR MANY D.S.P. RECIPIENTS TO BECOME PROFESSIONAL JOB-INTERVIEW FAILURES BASED ON A COMMISSION PAYMENT. WHO WOULD EMPLOY MANY PERSONS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS IF THEY TOLD THE TRUTH ABOUT THEIR CONDITION? WHAT SORT OF JOBS WOULD BE AVAILABLE OR SUITABLE?

AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS OFTEN A PRIORITY IN STAYING WELL AND CONTINUING TO BE PRODUCTIVE. IF I WERE TO LOSE MY SUBSIDISED HOUSING I WOULD LOSE MOST OF MY THINGS THAT HAVE TAKEN A LIFE-TIME TO BUILD UP. I WOULD HAVE TO GO BACK TO A SIMILAR SITUATION AS IN MY CHILDHOOD OF HAVING ALMOST NO THINGS AND LIVING OUT OF A SMALL LUGGAGE. ~~THE~~

PRO.

⑤ ABOUT MENTALLY ILL PEOPLE IN SUBSIDISED HOUSING I WOULD GIVE YOU THIS PROFILE OF A MENTALLY ILL PERSON IN THE MAJORITY OF CASES.

: HE/SHE IS MOST LIKELY TO BE THE PERSON MOST PICKED ON IN THE COMMUNITY OF RESIDENTS, HE/SHE THE MOST, WANTS THE LEAST AMOUNT OF TROUBLE FROM OTHER RESIDENTS. OCCASIONALLY BEING NOISY OR EXHIBITING STRANGE BEHAVIOR BUT USUALLY NOT HARMING ANOTHER PERSON. THEY CAN BE UNFAIRLY CALLED NAMES OR KEPT AT A DISTANCE BY OTHER RESIDENTS FOR TIMES OF OFTEN EXTREME ANGER/OR EXHAUSTION.

HE/SHE IS OFTEN A PILLAR OF COMPLIANCE.

I HAVE SEEN THIS PROFILE MANY TIMES AND FITS MORE WITH MY KNOWLEDGE OF PERSONS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS THAN THE SENSATIONALISM OF THE TABLOIDS. HAVING A MENTAL ILLNESS DOESN'T MAKE ONE MORE UNINTELLIGENT OR HATEFUL, LESS SENSITIVE OR PERCEPTIVE. OFTEN THE EXACT OPPOSITE IS TRUE. THE MENTALLY ILL OFTEN EXPERIENCE TIMES OF DISORGANIZATION OR BEHAVIOR ABNORMALITIES BUT OFTEN CAN CONTINUE BEING PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS WITH ENOUGH COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SOME INFRASTRUCTURE TO ALLOW THEM TO LIVE OFTEN HUMBLE, LOW-INCOME LIVES. WE CAN HELP OURSELVES AND EACH OTHER AND HELP, BY OUR EXPERIENCE, TO ~~GO~~ SHAPE THE COLLECTIVE IDENTITY OF OUR SOCIETY IN A POSITIVE WAY.

IT IS A SHAME THAT THE SERVICES NEEDED TO KEEP PEOPLE WELL ARE RUN DOWN AND OFTEN UNDER-RESOURCED. LOW-INCOME HOUSING IS INCREASINGLY BECOMING HARDER TO OBTAIN AND LONGER TO WAIT FOR. CENTRALINK BENEFITS HAVE BECOME HARDER TO QUALIFY FOR AND MAINTAIN QUALIFICATION FOR. WORK HAS BECOME MORE SPECIALISED / CAREER ORIENTATED. MANY MENTAL-HEALTH WORKERS ARE BECOMING TIRED, DISILLUSIONED OR DE-MORALIZED.

⑥. ILLLEGAL DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND GAMBLING HAVE BECOME MORE PREVALENT MAKING MORE MENTAL HEALTH PITFALLS. THERE IS LESS EMPHASIS PUT ON HAVING MORAL STRENGTHS OR PARTAKING IN ORGANIZED VIRTUE. THE WESTERN WORLD'S LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS ARE BASED LOOSELY ON ITS CHRISTIAN HERITAGE. ORGANIZED RELIGION OR SPIRITUALITY CAN SAVE AND HEAL MANY PROBLEMS AROUND MENTAL HEALTH. IT IS A SHAME THAT THEY SEEM TO BE GETTING A BATTERING IN THESE MODERN TIMES. THERE IS A SPIRIT OF HOSTILITY ON OUR STREETS THAT COULD BE VERY DESTRUCTIVE TO THE WORLD'S FUTURE. ALL THESE THINGS AND MANY OTHERS, LEAD TO A CRISIS IN MENTAL HEALTH. MANY COULD LEARN FROM THOSE WHO HAVE SURVIVED THESE CRISISES. AND I BELIEVE THAT NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO PULL THE RUG FROM UNDER THOSE THAT CAN OFFER THE COMMUNITY SOME WISDOM. I UNDERSTAND THAT A GOVERNMENT HAS TO PRIORITIZE FUNDING, BUT TO LEAN HARDER AND HARDER ON THOSE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PEcking ORDER IS NOT THE WAY ESPECIALLY WHEN MANY OTHERS ARE PROFITING UNASHAMEDLY MATERIALLY AT THIS TIME. THIS POLARIZATION AND DOUBLE-STANDARD SYSTEM WILL NOT HELP ALL TO FEEL SECURE AND PRODUCE WHAT IS NEEDED FOR US TO SURVIVE AS A RACE OF BEINGS. WHAT IS NEEDED CANNOT BE MEASURED IN DOLLARS AND CENTS. HUMAN BEINGS ARE NOT MADE UP OF BUNDLES OF DOLLARS. WE ARE NOT AS MUCH A FACTORY AS A FIELD OF FARM-LAND. AS A PERSON WHO EXPERIENCES MENTAL ILLNESS I HAVE GAINED VARIOUS USEFUL AND RELEVANT ALTHOUGH OFTEN UNUSUAL UNDERSTANDINGS AND I BELIEVE AS A SPECIES THE HUMAN RACE IS IN SOME TROUBLE BUT I CAN SEE, AND IT IS WELL DOCUMENTED THAT THERE IS A HIDDEN COST TO SOCIETY FROM OPPRESSING POOR PEOPLE.

I HOPE THE COMMITTEE WILL CONSIDER THIS ACCOUNT FAIRLY AS WELL AS THE MANY OTHERS SUBMITTED.

I HOPE THAT FAIR RECOMMENDATIONS ARE ARRIVED AT BY THE COMMITTEE. I AM AVAILABLE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AS REQUESTED.

YOURS SINCERELY STEPHEN CORN,

# Corry thinks globally, acts locally

VILLAGE PEOPLE ■

BY CHRISTINE KEARNEY

STEPHEN Corry is a familiar face around Balmain; he can often be seen busking in front of Woodworths or painting at Rozelle markets.

However, it is his behind-the-scenes work for the area's less privileged, for which he receives the least recognition, that gives him the most pride.

Stephen is the voluntary representative of more than 250 public housing tenants in Balmain. He represents his fellow tenants in dealings with the Department of Housing.

Stephen also drives community transport buses and is a regular helper at Rozelle Hospital and Foundation House, the local drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre.

"I suffer from schizophrenia, so I have been extremely active in mental health, such as making sure the local rehabilitation centre saved," he says.

He is able to control his mental illness with the support of "a strong network of people and family, as well as medication and the arts".

Stephen is a passionate artist. His works have been displayed at local cafes and at the NSW Writers' Centre in Rozelle.

He is particularly proud of his portrait of mare Ernie Ridding - a Glebe resident who, while alive, fixed electrical goods and donated them to Sydney's disadvantaged.

Stephen plays the flute at St Joseph's Catholic Church in Rozelle on most Sundays.

"Because of it I cop a lot of flak in our neighbourhood," he says. "It is unusual these days if you don't take drugs and you go to church!"

His focus on the community is selfless.

"I believe in the motto 'think global, act local', he says.

Stephen was born in Balmain Hospital in



Stephen Corry and a painting of his mare Ernie Ridding

1963. As a young child he lived in Woodlark St in Rozelle and went to school at the former Christian Brothers Balmain in Thames St.

He says he has never considered living anywhere else.

"I know more people in Balmain than I do anywhere in the universe," he says. "I don't know a lot of the new residents, but I know a lot of the old ones and I like to keep that connection to the past."

Restaurant, 133a King Street, Newtown. Wednesday, May 23, at Aussie Flavours.

■ Corry's solo exhibition will open at 6 pm.

society's perceptions of sanity and insanity. His subjects - relationship, spirituality and politics - are entwined in metaphors that challenge boundary to the arts.

highlight the theme that mental illness is no this week's Schizophrenia Awareness Week, to a solo exhibition of printmaking works during

Corry, who has schizophrenia, will be opening artist Stephen Corry (pictured).

was has been a healing force for Newtown and the gift of bringing to life a blank canvas is often an expression of the inner-self

## Healing force



## Art helps mental health

PATIENTS from Rozelle Hospital's mental health services showed their artistic ability last week.

Around 60 patients entered the hospital's second annual art show with organisers reporting an "overwhelming response".

Occupational therapy supervisor Linda Ford said the show had a positive influence on patients.

"In psychiatry and occupational therapy we use a lot of the creative media to help develop people's skills," she said.

Winners were announced in four sections of drawing, literature, mixed media and painting.

Helan Hopwood, Lindy Lane, Leo Engelen and Roy Horner were the respective winners.



Steven Corry won second prize in the drawing section of the art show with "Friends"