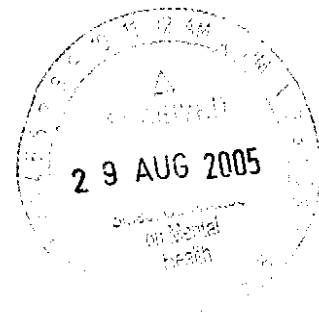


THE SENATE ENQUIRY INTO THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM
Parliament House , Canberra.



Dear Sirs/Maa'ns;

I would like permission to add this following comment , as an addendum, to a previous submission of last week, made as a carer for a severely mentally ill son, of some twenty years now, experience of this system, since its inceptions with the passing of the “deinstitutionalisation” legislation.

I would like to submit the enclosed photocopy of some efforts of my son at writing a western novel- he has written some 40 or so of these(before his illness , he was a very able artist/ musician, and topped his class in science).

Were the enquiry members to peruse this inclusion,, I would then like to ask the following question of the enquiry, which is “ How can anyone, with the extent of neuro transmitter problems illustrated in this writing, be expected to cope within the average community?To function normally, a brain must be able to” talk to itself” - if th;e neurotransmitter chemicals aren't there for this to h;appen, aren't made,and that “ making sense of input data” doesn't happen, you have., in one case anyway, “schizophrenia”.

My son WANTS to think—he tries, desperately hard- fortunately, he has enough of a sense of humour to laugh wryly at his own inability to achieve that wh;ich happens for the rest of us simply as a matter of course. Without constant support and help, with shopping, cooking, medication , doctor v isits and so on, my son does not last very long, before he is back in hospital, for a rest so that ;his head can stop spinning, and his defeated morale find a bit of a grip on the bottom rung of the ladder again.

As asserted in my previous submission, the basis for rational debate on this issue of mental disability, necessarily should have as its beginning point, the acceptance by government and community alike, that genetic disability in general , is NOT a “ family responsibility”; th;at it is an inevitable outcome ;historically, of human reproduction, which is a flawed process , producing a statistic of about 6 per cent serious genetic disablement.- and the common sense of this situation is,. Of course, that if society wants the 94 percent of the good, it must needs take community responsibility for those of the human family that arrive with a genetic “ hit” , so to speak.No sense will come ultimately of any debate about kinds and forms of assistance , that does not h;ave this concept as a given.

It was implicit in my previous submission , that “ deinstitutionalisation “ was a thoroughly disingenuous , and reprehensible political ploy , to shift responsibility in these matters back to where is doesn't and never did belong, on to the shoulders of families and relatives.- for purposes in the end, of nothing more noble than revenue saving- so wh;at else would you expect from a dru;nk! Hawke was brilliant at politics and conflict resolution- as

a social engineer, he couldn't as the saying goes, find his own bottom with both hands! How is it "fair and reasonable" that some one say, in my situation, should have the expense and effort of raising and educating two daughters, to help them get their degrees, and get onto their feet professionally, and in addition to shoulder, in my case as a divorced person, on my own, the full burden of carer for a son with a disabling mental illness? I have not, and will not have, any "carefree" retirement, or later years; my days are spoken for, day in and day out, week in, and week out, every day; of the week, every; week of the month, every month of the year- as cook, caterer, housekeeper, social worker, nurse supervisor- for which I am "paid" the handsome sum of 40 dollars a week, in a year in which the average male wage has just tipped a \$ 1000 a week! Not surprisingly, I live completely, and have, for many many years now, without any income, in the most abject poverty; my 40 dollars just about covers the running costs of the small second hand car I absolutely need, at age 73, with my health profile, to cope. And with my health rapidly going further down hill, I know that I won't "cope" these days, for very much longer at all! What is the situation of my son then, in this brave new world of "deinstitutionalisation"?

The Burgess, and Richmond reports, have come and gone- it is not as if we haven't, as a community, been "told" about the realities of life in this politically created mental health system. I believe, the members of both sides of Parliament, and the Australian community in general, really, need to be quite ashamed of their role in the studied neglect of the most disabled and disadvantaged members of our society- we all arrive on this planet the same way- it is not their fault if, in getting here, some have "very bad luck" - WE, as a community, need to care about that- my final comment to the enquiry, and to the Australian community in general about these matters is get, real, wake up and accept your responsibilities- and, I feel I must add GET OFF MY BACK.

Thank you

Yours faithfully,

