



Sent: Saturday, 3 December 2005 10:49 PM  
To: Committee, Mental Health (SEN)  
Subject: mental health needs

To the Committee,

I'm a fifty something person who suffers from paranoid schizophrenia and agoraphobia with an attendant anxiety disorder and a thirty something history of mental illness and ineffectual medication. I bring with me to this committee no formal qualifications except that I have a degree in surviving schizophrenia bestowed on me by the university of life.

And I'll leave it to the salaried professionals to quote the facts and figures but from my first hand experience I can say one has to be dangerously unwell - to the point where they are a real threat to themselves or the less likely scenario of being a threat to others - even to be considered for a bed in a psychiatric hospital here in Melbourne.

The negative outcomes from this unfortunate circumstance reflects poorly on our politicians unwillingness to bite the bullet and not only allocate sufficient money but to actually spend it in such a manner so that anyone even moderately marginalized let alone seriously so and who is truly deserving of a psychiatric bed in a psychiatric hospital ward will be duly attended to.

While It's been said that throwing money at the problem will not solve it, from where I sit it's not a bad place to begin. The system itself, that of deinstitutionalizing mental health system consumers and placing them totally unprepared and unready back into an unwelcoming community, was fatally flawed from the beginning and is perhaps the biggest political blunder in recent medical history.

But we have to constantly remind ourselves that this isn't rocket science. It's not a difficult thing to understand that there is a greater demand for psychiatric beds than there is supply. And given the existence of that unhappy situation it's not difficult to understand that the number of available beds needs to be increased so that the problem is diminished and abated to a level where all those needing psychiatric treatment in a psychiatric hospital will receive it.

Kindest regards,

