

**Submission  
No 25**

# **INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH CARE DELIVERY IN NSW**

**Name:** Mrs Elizabeth Davidson  
**Date Received:** 10 July 2017

My sister has suffered with schizophrenia most of her adult life. She has been the subject of a Court Treatment Order most of her adult life also. Her mental health rapidly deteriorates when not compliant with her medication. She has a long history of violence when unmedicated and has previously been charged and convicted of attempted murder.

I allege that for a considerable period in 2010, the Mental Health Service in Port Macquarie failed to administer the Court Ordered Treatment to her. As a result her mental health deteriorated to the point where she was evicted from her public housing which she had previously managed to maintain for over ten years whilst medicated.

Of course being evicted from her accommodation whilst being unmedicated, despite a Court Treatment Order, meant she became a homeless person.

My sister, whilst the subject of a Court Treatment Order, but being unmedicated for her serious mental health condition, soon progressed to an extremely psychotic state for which she tried to self medicate with alcohol and cannabis. Her psychotic state and violent outbursts to those around her lead to her admission to the Mental Health Unit in Port Macquarie Base Hospital. This admission was not a lengthy one for someone suffering such a serious mental health condition and I allege that her discharge was premature and complicated by the fact she had no home to be discharged to.

Because my sister was homeless, considerable pressure and emotional blackmail was used on our elderly parents (mother 79, father 80) by the staff in the Mental Health Unit to effect her discharge to their home.

I also allege this discharge to be completely inappropriate and I DO believe that the difficult position my parents found themselves in quite likely contributed to a serious loss of hope and control over their lives especially for my father. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

As my parents primary carer I was their advocate. The Mental Health Service excluded my voice. When I expressed concerns that my sister may have been poisoning my father and this was possibly the reason for many of his recent ailments, the social worker dismissed my concerns. She stated that his ailments were more likely the result of the stress of the situation. In hindsight this should have been a greater red flag for her and was an indicator of his genuine concerns for his and my mother's safety.

My parents should never have been put in the position of being “seen to turn their back on their child”. They should never have been approached and pressured to provide accommodation to such a severely mentally unwell person with a record of a ready willingness to resort to violence. There were documented threats towards my father from my sister that she would “see him dead” but these red flags for potential deadly abuse were ignored. I allege NO consideration was given to the physical health and safety of my parents and no consideration given for their advanced age, their physical limitations, or for their peace of mind and mental well being. My sister could only have been described as exhibiting bizarre and worrying behaviour.

My parents, indirectly, were casualties of the Mental Health Service’s inability or deliberate omission to carry out the tasks they were given by the Courts. They placed my sister in the care of my parents but left them without any support or follow up to ensure the placement was appropriate and working satisfactorily.

### **The Issues.**

1. Medications not administered despite Court Treatment Order for a considerable period of time.
2. No breach of compliance instigated despite a legislative requirement to do so.
3. Frail, elderly (80 year old) parents pressured to take on the care of 52 year old violent, alcohol and drug affected schizophrenic.
4. A vulnerable person with a long and chronic documented history of schizophrenia was evicted when she had an acute episode of her long standing illness due to the non-administration of medication. Would the same have applied to a person suffering from an acute physical illness?

There were many “knock on” affects from the omission of medication. My sister is also a direct casualty. She experiences guilt and remorse over her actions towards my parents whilst inadequately medicated.

The Mental Health Service neglected to follow proper protocols and precautions set out in the legislation. They failed to use the legislation to obtain compliance in administering my sister’s medication despite clear and precise legislative requirements for them to do so. They had the authority and the power of the Courts. Legislation is useless if not complied with. The opportunity to instigate a breach of the Court Order was not acted on.

The “powers that be” who evicted her from her public housing had no consultation with family or carers or, I believe, the Mental Health Services who were designated the role of administering her medication and supposedly monitoring her state of mental health.

I have had to endure the speculation and innuendo within the community that my parents' death was deliberate. The investigation into their deaths seemed merely an exercise in being seen to have done the right thing. Under resourced police in regional areas are limited in their ability to do a thorough, step by step investigation to uncover the truth.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] I have written to the Health Care Complaints Commission, the Ombudsman, Julia Skinner who was the Health Minister at the time, my local member and anyone else I thought might listen.

Nobody wants to hear or acknowledge my concerns about how the Mental Health Service failed, not only my sister, but also my mother and father. No amount of letter writing, voicing my concerns and asking for explanations has come to fruition. It has simply been swept under the carpet.

Locally, everyone has "washed their hands" of the responsibilities and I still remain with these unanswered questions and unfinished emotional business.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] The parliamentary inquiry into the delivery of mental health services provides the opportunity to look at the events that took place prior to my parents' deaths and should not be allowed to pass. These events should not be swept under the carpet. A thorough investigation and inquiry needs to be undertaken.

If I am wrong, then so be it. If my allegations are found to be substantiated then at least finally, I and my parents will have been given a voice and this is paramount to me.