

28.10.09

To The Secretary,

The Senate Community Affairs Committee

POB 6100

Post. Use Can. 2600

Re: Suicide in Australia
Senate Enquiry
Submission

Dear Secretary & Senate Enquiry,

My friend committed suicide.

I blame the policies ~~of~~ implementation of policies, by the Howard govt, for his death & probably ^{for the deaths of} a lot of other disadvantaged & for mentally ill people.

My friend, in case, ~~is~~ as follows:

My friend got a specialist's diagnosis for a chronic spine

-condition, which had caused him ongoing pain.

The specialist gave him a medical certificate, which he showed Centrelink, however, he ~~after~~ complained to me, that Centrelink kept putting pressure on him, despite having a specialist's medical certificate & experiencing ongoing back pain. (This occurred during the Howard Govts reign & the Howard Govts implementation of the Mutual obligation Legislation).

The Howard Govts policy & relentless pressure, put on activities tested welfare recipients, pushed him over the edge & probably, many more like him.

My friend was a strong

character & no one ^{even} imagined he would commit suicide, however, the constant pressure he experienced from Centrelink & this fascist activity (tested benefits & mutual obligation policy), led him into a depression & he later suicided.

His flatmate also abused Centrelink, under the Howard Govt, for the pressure that was put on him, which led to his depression & suicide.

Research, at the time, done by Mission Australia, found that 4 out of 5 ^{of their} welfare recipients, ^{CLIENTS} have mental illnesses. Some who are diagnosed & many who are not diagnosed & other research found that the pressure put on these people,

4

by centrelink, made these vul-
nerable mental conditions worse,
as it did to my friend who was
pressured, went into depression &
later suicided.

Then there were the ^{people} 900/per
week, who were cut off their
benefits for 8 weeks (under the
Howard govt), & were left with
no money for food & shelter.
Leaving many in a helpless, at risk, situation.

B I wonder - how many young
people, under the Howard Govt,
who were on activity tested
benefits, who committed suicide?

Say under the age of 23,

Could you find out those figures

Please? * (Of course, there are drugs
like ice, etc that have
destroyed lives & I believe, undiagnosed
mental illnesses may lead to (1) suicides
(2) young people self-medicating themselves with drugs & this
probably needs to be looked at).

I also wonder, how many

5

people, who relied ^{Solely} on their benefits for food & shelter & were cut off their benefit for 8 weeks & committed suicide.

Could the senate find out those figures as well please?.

also I wonder, how many people who were cut off their benefits for 8 weeks & ÷

- were left homeless?

- turned to crime.

- turned to drugs & alcohol

- or died ~~and~~ were found dead

all the figures are available, it's just a matter of looking for them.

As mission Australia declared, 4 out of 5 of their clients

6

have mental illnesses.

People have got to get
this ^{point} is the pressure you
put on these vulnerable
or intellectually disadvantaged
people's, only serves to make
their condition worse!.

The implementation of callous
& cruel activity tested benefit
policies - are flawed, because of the
impact they have on these
intellectually & mentally disadvantaged
& the mentally ill; ~~diagnosed~~
~~undiagnosed~~, remembering,
there are literally 100's of
thousands of mentally ill, who
go undiagnosed & the policies
mentioned, only serve to impact

7

on the most vulnerable of these.

This is a poor indictment
on we, who are more gifted
& not afflicted with these
horribly debilitating problems, ie,
-creating these policies & for imple-
menting them.

Whilst I believe the breaches
have been cut-back, I believe
the activity tested benefits & the
pressures on the many who are
mentally vulnerable, still continue.

Pressures on many young people,
on activity tested benefits. Young
people who maybe displaced due
to domestic violence or other &
young people whom, like many, just
don't know what way they want to
go in life & really need time to

8
themselves & find
find their way & I believe
eventually it will come to
them & they'll want more
out of life, than being on a
\$230 per week activity tested
benefit & ^{ie the policy, is} its just socially &
economically flawed as well,
because economically, all this
money goes straight back into

the economy ^{ie unemployment benefits etc.}
also, in any economy, there'll always be a percentage of unemployed.

The young & the mentally ill
& young & the vulnerable & the
mentally disadvantaged, require policies
that don't put pressure on them, as
youth & other suicides are at a
very alarming level, as you know.

Many of these people have
talent & also they need to be

9

encouraged ^{2 reassured} that there is a light
at the end of the tunnel & they
need this counselling & help, just
to hold on, particularly for the
vulnerable.

They don't need cruel & callous
policy, that cuts them off, or puts
pressure on them & makes their
condition worse.

As expressed, those policies are
thoroughly flawed; socially, economic-
ally & humanitarily.

I'll be listening to your findings &
I would like to know, please, those
figures on suicides I asked for on
Page 4 & 5 of this letter.

Yours Sincerely

I must for ^{my} name to
remain private, however,
please see this as no sign
of disrespect.

Congratulations on a best wishes for the enquiry:
MATT SWIFT