

**Submission
No 12**

**INQUIRY INTO EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND
APPROPRIATE DELIVERY OF OUTPATIENT AND
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CARE IN NEW SOUTH
WALES**

Name: Mr Matthew Stonestreet

Date Received: 7 August 2023

To the Equity, accessibility and appropriate delivery of outpatient and community mental health care in New South Wales committee,

My name is Matthew Stonestreet and I am a citizen of NSW. I will be addressing terms of reference F of the inquiry.

During my statement I will demonstrate that Community Treatment Orders are a violation of human rights according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability, of which Australia is a signatory. And the only nation of 79 signatories that continue to forcibly medicate its citizens. Additionally, Community Treatment Orders are not only not effective method of treatment, they are instead a method of abuse that can be ordered against anyone who sees a Psychiatrist based entirely on the subjective opinion of that Psychiatrist. As well, these medications cause serious harm to the individual subject to the CTO and as a result to the entire community of NSW. Finally I will give you an insight into my experience within the mental health system as a person on a CTO.

In the preamble of the UN Convention I have attached statement (n) states, signatories must recognise that persons with a disability have the right to autonomy and independence including freedom to make their own choices. Community treatment orders clearly violate this right as they remove the right of citizens to make their own choices regarding their own health care. There is no other health treatment forced on a citizen and people considered to have a mental illness have the right to choose how they are best treated just like any other condition.

Article 3 statement (c) states the right to full and effective participation and inclusion in society. Psychotropic medication have severe consequences on those who are subject to their use and lead to a violation of their right to effective participation in society.

Article 4 statement (b) states that laws must be abolished that discriminate against those with a disability. As I have demonstrated, Community Treatment Orders discriminate against those with a disability and literally anyone a psychiatrist decides they believe have a mental illness or just say they have an illness when they clearly do not believe that. In some circumstances they are ordered against those without a mental illness as it's impossible for people to prove they do not have a mental illness.

Article 17 states that every person with a disability has the same right as any other citizen to their physical and mental integrity. It could not be more evident that Community Treatment Orders violate this right.

Now I would like to demonstrate the harms of Psychotropic Medication as stated in the National Library of Medicine article here <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4707562/>

The article states we could use a fraction of the Psychotropic medication we currently use and have a healthier and longer living society. And that Psychotropic medication is extremely harmful when used in the long term. I recommend if the state must use psychotropic medication then there should be a limit how much time they can be used for.

My experience within the mental health system is as follows. I was forced by way of injection medication before I was given a false diagnosis at a later time. I did not express to the psychiatrist any of the symptoms of the diagnoses I was given and clearly they knew it was a false diagnosis. I was given an off label higher dose than recommended. I repeatedly asked for a reduction in dose as it was seriously affecting my health and I was denied. I reported to a mental health facility for two years to remain compliant with the order and when my energy levels became too low I told them I could not make it to the facility and asked them for a home visit. They denied me of this and then sent the police to my house to bring me to the facility. The police should not be involved in forcing an individual to have medication. I recommend that if you must have a person on a CTO then home visits must be mandatory as some people simply can't attend a mental health facility. After years of treatment I noticed a clear change in the effect of the medication and I believe the medication I was given was changed without even discussing it with me. You can't trust hundreds of doctors and nurses with forced access to people's bodies as there is in any profession people who will abuse that power and potentially change the medication being delivered or add who knows what to the injection.

These medications should be only used when consent is given from the patient as the state will be responsible in future for the long term consequences of forced medical treatment.

There are other ways to treat mental illness than the current model of forced medications. I ask that as a state we move in another direction and examine new ways to deal with mental illness other than forcibly using medication that violates human rights and causes unacceptable harm to our citizens.

yours faithfully

Matthew Stonestreet