

INTRO

██████ is a person with psychotic illness who was placed in remand in April 2017.

For about five years before this ██████ had paranoid and psychotic incidents as a result of using ice. He had been treated twice by the Alfred Hospital Psychiatric Unit during this period.

In early 2017 his mental condition deteriorated and he committed a number of assaults in a psychotic state of mind.

While in remand in the ██████████ Assessment Prison, ██████ was refused treatment for five weeks before he was admitted to the ██████████ Hospital.

Over this time, ██████ parents were unable to contact their son, despite their repeated attempts.

Today ██████ and his father ██████ want to tell their story to the Royal Commission into Mental Health.

QUESTIONS

██████, can you start by telling us from your perspective what happened to you?

██████ can you tell us a bit about the experience at your end? Over this whole experience, what do you think would have made a difference to you? What changes would you like to see to the system so the same kind of thing doesn't happen again to someone else?

What's your message to the Royal Commission?
Anything you'd like to add?

Video Script background

6/05/2019

Introduction

██████ is a live case of a person with psychotic illness who was placed in remand in April 2017, and, due to Part 11, Section 275 of the Victorian Mental Health Act 2014, was refused treatment for 5 weeks before he was admitted to the ████████ Hospital ████████ for treatment. For about 5 years before this ████████ had a number of paranoid/psychotic incidents as a result of using ice. He had been treated twice by the Alfred Hospital Psychiatric Unit during this period. In February/March 2017 his mental condition deteriorated and he committed a number of assaults in a psychotic state of mind.

While in remand in the ████████ assessment Prison ████████ his parents tried to contact him unsuccessfully for 4 weeks and seriously worried about his health.

Details

1. After ████████ arrest on 6/04/2017 in a severely paranoid/psychotic condition, he was taken to the ████████ Police Station, held for 5 hours and then rushed, handcuffed behind his back, to the Magistrates' Court where he was put into an underground cell without a bed and food for 24 hours. Previous to his arrest and due to his paranoid condition, ████████ had sustained a severe shoulder injury. Handcuffing behind his back was very deleterious for this injury and he is now suffers from a chronic condition.
2. ████████ was ordered by the Magistrate to custody in the ████████ Assessment Prison ████████ still in the same serious psychotic mental condition. He was there for 5 weeks in this condition, being a totally traumatic experience for him, for the ████████ personnel dealing with him, and for his parents, who were not allowed to see him. He was not given medical treatment that would, after a few days, have brought him out of his severe psychotic/paranoiac condition. The reason for this inhumane treatment is because Part 11, Section 275 of the Victorian Mental Health Act 2014 prohibits compulsory treatment for people with severe mental illness/psychosis, who refuse treatment when they are in custody. ████████ refused treatment because he thought that the prison guards were trying to poison him.
3. During his time in ████████, his parents tried to:
 - a. Firstly, find out where he was being held by contacting the Department of Justice and the Minister for Mental Health, the latter who is their electorate representative. This took about 5 days to determine and we learnt that he was in ████████ and was very sick.
 - b. When we knew he was in ████████, we tried to find out what would happen to him and what sort of treatment he was being given. We asked that he be moved to the Alfred or St Vincent's Psychiatric. We were told that this was not possible.
 - c. We were eventually contacted by e-mail from the Department of Justice, who confirmed that:

“As you are aware a Compulsory Treatment Order is not applicable in the custodial setting, however, ████████ has been assessed by medical staff and it has been determined he needs specialised care, which has resulted in the referral to ████████”. We were not told that his compulsory treatment was not allowed under the relevant Act but we subsequently researched this.

- d. We visited [REDACTED] every 2 or 3 days for about 3 weeks to see [REDACTED] but were not able to do so because he was so sick. The Psychiatrist at [REDACTED] said that [REDACTED] is very, very sick. His mother, in particular, was very distraught during his custody at [REDACTED]
4. During this period [REDACTED] was not able to be heard by a Magistrate, even on video, because he was too violent. This was attempted 2 or three times.
 5. To enable him to be transferred to [REDACTED] Hospital [REDACTED], because he was still so paranoid/psychotic, his cell at [REDACTED] was filled with a choking gas and 6 security personnel with guard dogs manhandled him in a straightjacket. (It is possible that this gas has left him with permanent damage to his sinuses, which will need specialist medical treatment). Following a short time of observation, he was compulsorily treated with antipsychotic drug(s).
 6. After 5 days, the psychosis disappeared and [REDACTED] became mentally normal again. We were able to visit him for the first time in 6 weeks since his arrest. The doctors and nurses at [REDACTED] were very professional and helpful to [REDACTED] who was released for a Magistrate's hearing about 2 weeks later.
 7. By the time of this hearing, [REDACTED] had been in custody without a judgement for nearly 11 weeks. Had he been treated in [REDACTED] with anti-psychotic drugs, he would have been able to appear before a magistrate within 2 weeks or so of his arrest and hopefully been bailed then.
 8. [REDACTED] has a clear memory of what happened the day of his arrest and during his time in custody even though he was psychotic for much of the time. (One of the psychiatric nurses at [REDACTED] that it is quite possible for a person to have good recollection of events even though psychotic).
 9. [REDACTED] was ordered by the Magistrate to take part in the Court Integrated Services Program (CISP) and was doing this under the care of Alfred Hospital Mental Health, including a drug rehabilitation program. He returned to living in his community assisted flat and started working again as a landscaper/paver. He agreed with the Mental Health Tribunal to be voluntarily injected monthly (depot) to prevent internal voices/psychosis to occur again.