

To whom it may concern

My name is Paul Shiel and I am the founder of the Medal Mission Team in Sydney and I work with the homeless, the marginalized and struggling families. Prior to that I was an active member of St Vincent de Paul for 35 years and on the NSW board for Vinnies for 5 years.

I was on the board of the Newtown Neighborhood Center for 5 years.

I have also been a foster carer.

I thus have considerable experience dealing with children and people of all ages and especially in life circumstances of some high degree of difficulty and stress.

First-hand I have seen the effects of prescribed drugs on children. It is very real to me that people go through hard times, that children suffer emotional stresses due to life situations, troubles at school, troubles with parents, etc., and it is unfortunate that there are not more workable solutions available in our society currently. The unfortunate tendency is to resort to a “medical solution”, an apparent quick fix, which actually does no good for the person and makes things worse.

I directly have seen more positive effect on a family and children’s well-being through care and love, and assisting them to get on their feet when they are having a hard time. Far far more than any medicine ever helped.

So I disapprove of this proposal that we are going to do any social or emotional wellbeing analysis of young children. I strongly disapprove of this. Leave the kids alone for god's sake.

Last Monday night I went out with friends for a birthday and her grandson and great grandson were there – they were playing and doing the innocence things that a child does. I was thinking how horrifying it would be to have such a child checked into for his emotional wellbeing with the potential ramifications that could come from mistakes that could occur in that. He's just a baby!

How can you decide someone needs professional help when they are a baby?

Surely there are better solutions that could be investigated and proposed by the commission to improve the mental health of the country?

Yours sincerely,

Paul Shiel
Founder
Medal Mission team
Sydney