

14.1.2020

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing with concerns about the Draft Report of the Mental Health Productivity Commission, which seems to be proposing funding for mental health screening of 0-3 year olds.

I am in my 60's with two grownup children. In my youth, mental health was hardly mentioned and now it seems to have ballooned out of proportion, with a child's behaviour being called a mental health problem when before it was quite normal within a whole range of children's behaviours.

In the 70's I worked as a Group Worker in a youth detention centre. These days those boys would be labelled and given drugs. In those days we managed them well without drugs – we took them out on excursions, taught them woodwork, cooking and had them doing sport. Keeping them occupied and interested was the trick, not drugs.

Psychiatric drugs as far as I've heard can have disastrous consequences and once on them it is very difficult to wean off them and often patients progress downwards towards a vegetable-like state, feeling worse and worse, even suicidal. This is not what we want for our youth.

The vision of 0-3 year olds being screened and given psychiatric drugs because certain questions are answered in a certain way and deemed in someone's opinion as indicating a mental health problem, is scary. This is not scientific. It is not logical when compared with how we managed in the past.

Babies being put on psychiatric drugs is not giving them a fair chance at living a normal life. It seems incredible that anyone would want to do this purportedly to prevent them from having a mental health problem later on in life. I would say it would give them a mental health problem!

As a tax payer I object to my taxes being used for such a destructive program and ask that the Commission rejects such detrimental measures. Leave kids to grow up without such interference. Far better would be to put in programs to educate parents on how to help their children with nutritious food, exercise, plenty of sleep and healthy routines. The problem with the child is most often solved by educating the parents into better parenting.

Reg Evans