

# HELP PREVENT 1.25 MILLION 0-3 YEAR OLDS FROM BEING PUT AT RISK OF PSYCHIATRIC DRUGS

**AN AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL INQUIRY IS BEING CONDUCTED INTO MENTAL HEALTH TO DETERMINE IF CURRENT PROGRAMS ARE EFFECTIVE AND DELIVER THE BEST RESULTS FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND THE ECONOMY.**

The Draft Report of the inquiry states, “Despite the rising expenditure on healthcare, there has been no clear indication that the mental health of the population has improved.” Yet more funding is proposed to expand programs which are clearly failing because, if psychiatric treatments were working, there would be a reduction in children and adults requiring assistance. Current recommendations include:

## **1.25 MILLION ZERO TO THREE YEAR OLDS TO BE SCREENED FOR “MENTAL ILLNESS”:**

The numbers of infants and toddlers already prescribed potentially dangerous mind-altering drugs is set to greatly increase with a recommendation to screen this age group for “mental illness” or “emerging mental illness” (psychiatrists claim they can predict future mental illness by the use of an arbitrary list of questions, which is not possible). The recommendation as written in the Draft Report seems innocuous—checking emotional well-being, and of course we all want to see our children healthy. However, it really means “mental illness screening.” An expert advising Australia’s Federal Government stressed that other language for “emotional and social well-being,” should be found rather than using “mental illness and mental health terminology.” This gives it a whole new meaning. This same expert also said that despite different language used, in the educational system (who use “well-being”) and health service systems (who use disorder and diagnosis), a diagnosis is often required for the child to receive additional services.

The Draft Report is very clear about screening and diagnosis of infants stating: “The definition of infant mental health is still a matter of debate among experts, although more formalised approaches to diagnosis and treatment are being developed and implemented.”

**LACK OF SCIENTIFIC TESTS:** While medical diseases can be screened for and verified by physical tests, psychiatrists admit there are no tests to confirm any psychiatric diagnosis (no x-ray, scan, blood or urine test). Screening questions are so subjective that any child could be at risk of being labelled mentally ill and recommended for a prescription of psychiatric drugs.

**Symptoms for so called psychiatric disorders for 0 to 3 year-olds include: irregular feeding, difficulty sleeping, crying, temper tantrums, losing track of a favourite stuffed animal and hyperactivity.**

It is proposed that maternal and child nurses in community health services expand current physical checks to include behavioural screening. They would refer any identified child for a “final diagnosis,” which will also be based on a subjective checklist. The Draft Report itself says there is no adequate data to assess whether the increased focus on infant emotional well-being has had a substantial effect on young children and their families. Despite this lack of evidence, the screening recommendation is going full steam ahead accompanied with more demands for money.



## **IN 2007/08 AUSTRALIA HAD BABIES UNDER ONE YEAR OLD ON PSYCHIATRIC DRUGS.**

At this time there were:

- 201 children aged under 3 on antidepressants, of which 48 were younger than 1 year old.
- 59 children aged under 3 on antipsychotics, with 5 younger than 1.
- 46 children aged under 3 on ADHD drugs.

## **BY 2015, THERE WERE A STAGGERING 7,817 CHILDREN AGED 2-6 YEARS OLD ON A PSYCHIATRIC DRUG**

(4,974 on ADHD drugs, 1,459 on antidepressants and 1,349 on antipsychotics.) Services Australia stopped providing the number of children on psychiatric drugs by age, under 6.

## **SCREENING OF 3 YEAR OLDS WAS SCRAPPED IN 2015:**

In 2012, a 3 year old’s physical check called “Healthy Kids Check” was expanded to include screening for “mental illness” and was trialled at 8 Medicare Locals. Due to immense public criticism, this invasive screening was scrapped in 2015. Yet, now psychiatrists want to use the same guidelines to screen 3 to 4 year-olds as those used in the dumped Expanded Healthy Kids Check. Symptoms from this check include: fidgety, easily distracted, acts as if driven by a motor and doesn’t listen to rules. When New Zealand introduced behavioural screening of 4 year-olds, within four years, prescriptions of antidepressants to those aged 0 to 4 years-old increased by 140%.

**PSYCHIATRY’S ABUSIVE TREATMENTS:** There is no evidence in the Draft Report that the side effects of psychiatric drugs, the use of restraints and electroshock or other invasive procedures have been investigated as “treatments” for children and adults.

Yet in December 2019, Australia's drug regulatory agency database revealed there were 1,907 deaths linked to antidepressants and antipsychotics. In 2019 Medicare funded 36,792 electroshock "treatments." Electroshock can cause brain damage, permanent memory loss, cardiovascular complications, and death and should be banned.



for this inquiry. He is the psychiatrist who designed and oversaw implementation of Australia's National Mental Health Strategy (which commenced in 1992). Between 2008 and 2012 alone, his company, Harvey Whiteford Medical PTY LTD, received more than \$1.1 million from the Department of Health for providing planning and services for national mental health reform etc.

**WASTED TAXPAYERS' MONEY:** Mental health spending has increased 44.2% in the past ten years, now reaching nearly \$10 billion, without accountability, including positive results. The Draft Report estimates that the real cost is \$43 to \$51 billion a year. Conflicts of interest between psychiatrists, mental health support groups and pharmaceutical companies have not been investigated for their potential role in the soaring costs and harm from psychiatric drugs. When the very science behind something is so wrong and the treatments offered are harmful, no amount of money thrown at it will improve the system.

**WHO IS CONDUCTING THE INQUIRY:** The inquiry is being conducted by Australia's Productivity Commission, the Australian Governments' main review and advisory body on economic policy. Prof. Harvey Whiteford has been made an associate commissioner

**SOLUTIONS:** There is no doubt that children and adults get depressed, anxious or even act psychotic. The issue is how they are helped. They should be given holistic, humane care that improves their condition. Key is finding the cause of the problem which can vary greatly for each person and rectifying this. Proper medical tests can determine if there is an undiagnosed and untreated medical condition manifesting as a "psychiatric disorder." Medical doctors also recommend a good diet, sufficient sleep and exercise. Facilities should be quiet, safe havens where adults and children voluntarily seek help without fear of indefinite incarceration and terrifying treatment. They need places where they can get workable and accountable help for their problems. The existing money spent needs to be re-directed into proven workable solutions.

**The Final Report has been given to Federal Parliament and when it is tabled it will be made public. Your help is needed before the 1st of December 2020.**

## TAKE ACTION

**Visit, write, phone or email your Premier, Health Minister and Local MP.**

**Advise them of the recommendations and request they do not support funding for them.**

**Find contact details below for Federal Parliament and your state:**

Federal: [www.aph.gov.au/Senators\\_and\\_Members/Guidelines\\_for\\_Contacting\\_Senators\\_and\\_Members](http://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Guidelines_for_Contacting_Senators_and_Members)

NSW: [parliament.nsw.gov.au/members/pages/all-members.aspx](http://parliament.nsw.gov.au/members/pages/all-members.aspx)

Vic: [parliament.vic.gov.au/about/people-in-parliament/members-search/list-all-members](http://parliament.vic.gov.au/about/people-in-parliament/members-search/list-all-members)

Qld: [parliament.qld.gov.au/members/current/list](http://parliament.qld.gov.au/members/current/list)

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Tas: [parliament.tas.gov.au/ha/halists.pdf](http://parliament.tas.gov.au/ha/halists.pdf)

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**Share this Fact Sheet with Others: Contact CCHR to obtain free copies or log onto [cchr.org.au](http://cchr.org.au) to print additional copies.**

**WARNING:** No one should stop taking any psychiatric drug without the advice and assistance of a competent medical doctor. Log onto [cchr.org.au](http://cchr.org.au) to see references for the above and more information.



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