

Justice Action Report

Justice Action will now send a weekly report to the internal mailing list. This will ensure you are kept up to date with our latest news and projects. You will also be better equipped to provide helpful assistance and advice if you know what we are currently up to.

Here's what we have been working on from **Monday 12/09/11 – Friday 30/09/11**

'JUST US'

Just Us is an Australian and New Zealand detainees newspaper that follows on from its predecessor, *Framed*. Our most recent edition of *Just Us* in March 2011 focuses on issues relevant to prisoners and mental health consumers, such as their right to vote. The paper's distribution was refused within NSW prisons and forensic hospitals.

VICTORY: On September 23, 2011 Justice Action received a settlement from Justice Health. We have got a court declaration that it was wrong of them to reject the newspaper from entry into its hospitals on the grounds that it contained political information. Additionally, a new policy for the acceptance of papers into forensic hospitals will be adopted by forensic health.

- Ian and Evan collated an email distribution list of Clinical Directors within the Mental Health system and drafted letters to remind directors of the recent policy decisions regarding the distribution of materials in Forensic Hospitals
- Maria wrote a letter to the Crown Solicitor asking for a copy of the policy that will relate to the settlement from Justice Health.
- Geoff drafted a letter to peak organisations asking for comments relating to our *Just Us* victory.
- NSW Greens MP John Kaye will write a letter of recommendation to the Mental Health Minister supporting the circulation of *Just Us* to mental health consumers in hospitals.
- NSW Greens MP David Shoebridge will contact the Corrective Services Minister to inform him/her that he supports Justice Action's proposal on the basis of respecting prisoners' rights to political information.

MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMER LETTER

- A letter is being sent to mental health consumers asking for contributions to our *Just Us* newspaper. We are seeking opinions, ideas and stories on the issues that are most pertinent to consumers and the challenges they face.
- Andrea, Donna and David compiled a database for national organisations to whom we will send this Mental Health Consumer letter to so that they can pass it on to their consumers.
- Andrea and Dani gathered contact details of the Clinical Directors of the Mental Health units within hospitals in order to send them the Mental Health Consumer letter.

- David, Donna, Isabella and Justine followed up emails sent to health providers concerning the Mental Health Consumer letter.
- Jasmine compiled a list of organisations and their contact information in order to send them the Mental Health Consumer letter.
- You can read the letter here: <http://justiceaction.org.au/cms/publications/justiceaction/item/425-letter-to-consumers>
- NSW Greens MP John Kaye has agreed to write to Kevin Humphries, the Minister for Mental Health, stating his support for Justice Action's letter to consumers.

SAEED DEZFOULI

This campaign supports the right of forensic hospital patient Saeed Dezfouli to use his own name when identifying himself, receive visitors, and exert choice in relation to his medication.

VICTORY: On September 23, 2011, in a breakthrough over two years in the making, Justice Action workers were granted permission to visit Saeed at the Long Bay Forensic Hospital.

- Rosie and Dani produced a media release asking for intervention from the NSW Minister for Mental Health Kevin Humphries in relation to the limits placed on visitation rights to victims of the mental health system, specifically Saeed. This media release can be read on our website at this address: <http://justiceaction.org.au/cms/mental-health/campaigns/saeed-dezfouli/item/411-media-releases-and-resources>
- Ian, Edwin and Cathy followed up this media release with calls, faxes and emails to Mr Humphries and forwarded the release onto various media sources.
- The release was further followed through to The Greens and the ALP, and Carla and Nicole gathered wider contacts lists.
- Brett sought and gained legal aid for Saeed - and he got his choice of lawyer.
- Will and Rosie worked on a timeline of Saeed's case, summarising what has taken place since our first interactions with him in January 2002.
- Andrea continued efforts to have Saeed's hearing costs waived.
- Dani produced a media release concerning our breakthrough in gaining permission to visit Saeed. This media release can be read on our website at this address: <http://justiceaction.org.au/cms/mental-health/campaigns/saeed-dezfouli/item/411-media-releases-and-resources>
- A visit to Saeed was organised and Brett, Dani, Rosie and Adriana went into the Long Bay Forensic Hospital on September 29, 2011.
- Brett and Dani attended Saeed's Mental Health Review Tribunal hearing at the Long Bay Forensic Hospital on September 29, 2011.
- Dani produced a report on Saeed's Mental Health Review Tribunal hearing and Rosie produced a report on the experience of visiting Saeed at the Long Bay Forensic Hospital. These reports can be read on our website at this address: <http://justiceaction.org.au/cms/mental-health/campaigns/saeed-dezfouli/item/431-reports-first-visit-to-saeed/mhrt-hearing>

- More on Saeed's campaign can be read here:
<http://justiceaction.org.au/cms/mental-health/campaigns/saeed-dezfouli>

'COMPUTERS IN CELLS'

This campaign seeks to introduce computers into every prison cell to facilitate self-improvement through education and vocational training, increase social inclusion, and reduce recidivism.

- Links were made between our 'Computers in Cells' project and the information discussed at the recent Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, 'Building Bridges, Not Walls'. Geoff, Bobby, Justine and Isabella made efforts to contact the organisers of this conference to raise awareness of the 'Computers in Cells' campaign, and introduce the possibility of working together on our shared goal to increase opportunities for inmates.
- Adriana and Emma sent a letter to the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council and the Australian Council of Churches to try to achieve this.
- Rosie made follow up phone calls to the religious organisations and leaders contacted, including Bishop Saunders, John Ferguson and Dr Brennan.
- Geoff and Rosie drafted a letter to Joseph Haweil and Tara Curlewis from the National Council of Churches on this issue.
- Emma followed up this letter with phone calls to Joseph Haweil and Tara Curlewis in attempt to gain a response relating to their interest in our 'Computers in Cells' project.
- Ken continued his ongoing research surrounding our 'Computers in Cells' project.
- More on our 'Computers in Cells' project can be read here:
<http://justiceaction.org.au/cms/images/stories/CmpgnPDFs/computersincells.pdf>

NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH STATEMENT OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Kristy compiled a response to the revised version of this statement of rights.

CONFERENCES & EVENTS ATTENDED

- Brett, Dani, Bobby and Justine attended the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference on Wednesday 14th September, and Brett attended the Mental Health Services Conference (TheMHS) in Adelaide the previous week.
- Edwin attended the Sydney Alliance Launch at Town Hall on Thursday, which aims to bring together and build a community of organisations that each share the aim to achieve social justice across a range of issues in Sydney.
- Rosie, Emma, Adriana, Jaspreet and Kristy attended the WIPAN (Women in Prison Advocacy Network) annual meeting on Friday. WIPAN works to address the inequalities faced by women in the prison system.

- Geoff, Ken, David, Dani, Rosie, Isabella and Donna journeyed to Parliament House on Macquarie Street and met with NSW Greens MP John Kaye who has a strong interest in mental health and NSW Greens MP David Shoebridge who has a strong interest in the criminal justice system. Some of our central concerns and projects were discussed, including the *Just Us* newsletter, the 'Free Saeed' campaign, and issues relating to social enterprise and Callan Park.
- Brett, Dani, Rosie and Adriana went into the Long Bay Forensic Hospital to visit patient Saeed Dezfouli.
- Brett and Dani attended Saeed Dezfouli's Mental Health Review Tribunal Hearing at the Long Bay Forensic Hospital.