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LONG BAY PRISON HOSPITAL – OFFICERS’ STRIKE

“Officers at Long Bay Prison Complex are on total strike at the removal of their positions in the Long Bay Prison Hospital. This means that Justice Minister Hatzistergos has the whole Long Bay prison community in crisis due to his callous attempt to cut costs and remove 28 prison officer positions on April 2” said Justice Action spokesperson Brett Collins.

The loss of those positions led to the permanent 18 hour solitary confinement of mental patients. The whole mental health profession nationally, other authorities, teachers and patients have called for its reversal, ” said Justice Action spokesperson Michael Poynder.

The strike began last Tuesday, and is likely to continue over the weekend.

“The effect on the patients has been horrific. Service providers have expressed horror at this latest escalation. Normally such vulnerable people would be exempt from industrial action. This total isolation in single cells for mentally ill people amounts to torture and will cause immense damage,” said Mr Collins.

“This out of control crisis means that Premier Iemma can no longer abandon responsibility to his minister. He gave assurances to Parliament as Health Minister in 2004 that oblige him to intervene. We call for him to accept judicial control of the area as is adopted by the US in such a situation, and to grant an immediate visit to the patients from their families and community support” said Mr Collins.

Background is on the website – “Line in the sand”:

<http://www.justiceaction.org.au>

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