

It's Mothers Day today.

It's my third mothers day without Nicky .

Nicky's not here because the mental health system failed to keep him safe.

At high risk of suicide and against our families strong advocacy he was let out (repeatedly) from the mental health unit, alone for a smoke. He never came back.

This week another family lost their daughter in the same way.

I'm heartbroken and angry that yet another person has needlessly died.

And I'm angry about the denials and bullshit we are being fed by Health Minister Jonathon Coleman.

He keeps telling us that our mental health services are of a **"high quality"** and that there is no need for a inquiry into the state of mental health services in NZ. That is a sick joke.

Here's a snapshot of Nicky's **"high quality"** experience with mental health services in the Waikato.

This **"high quality"** mental health system killed my son.

Jane Stevens, Nicky Stevens' Mum





Hamilton mental health clients' **"high quality"** waiting room at Pharmacy 547. Nicky used to have to sit here for 2 hours after having his two weekly medication. He was required to stay in case he had a potentially lethal reaction to the drug he was injected with. They had to sit outside here because the pharmacy doesn't like mental health clients 'hanging' about in the building after treatment. With nothing else to do, they would sit around sharing cigarettes.



This is the base for the **“high quality”** community based mental health service that Nicky was under. Hauora Waikato were based here in this very welcoming building. It looks more like somewhere the SIS might hang out. Nicky hated going there; it was clinical and void of anything relevant to a young person. The only signage outside the building was tragically accurate – their **“high quality care”** was a one way journey for Nicky.



The main entrance of the HBC, intimidating and empty of any sort of welcome



The prison like ward foyer entrance



The creepy artwork that greets you in the foyer of the wards



The dangerous river gully track opposite the Henry Bennett centre where Nicky had to go to smoke

Here is the **“high quality”** acute mental health service centre for the Waikato DHB. Based in the Henry Bennett Centre. Its a foreboding castle-like fortress which even the current CEO Nigel Murray describes as not fit for purpose from the day it opened. Nicky ended up here 3 times as a result of acute periods of illness. The last time because his **“high quality”** community health team didn't give him the medication he was required by law to take to stay well. He didn't survive this last admission to the Henry Bennett Centre.



Here's one of the **"high quality"** Doctors employed by Waikato DHB mental health services. He was Nicky's main physician while in HBC the second time. He was deregistered in America prior to being employed here. His name is Paul Fox, the 'psychiatrist' for Sandy Hook elementary school mass murderer Adam Lanza. He is currently up on charges of sexual assault on a patient in America. He put Nicky on the drug regime that he remained on till he died.



This photo is a representation only.

Nicky's body is pulled from the Waikato River 3 days after him going missing from the Henry Bennett Centre. The DHB utterly failed to keep him safe. Which part of this is a **"high quality"** of care? Add to that the **"high quality"** services provided by our police. The police made sure Nicky didn't stand a chance of surviving by failing to search for him for nearly 3 days after he was reported missing.



These photo's are a representation only

The final **“high quality”** service provided to Nicky by Waikato DHB. Conveniently, just up the path from the Henry Bennett Centre is the morgue at Waikato Hospital. Here's a photo of a morgue viewing room, much like the one where we had to go and identify Nicky. The rooms were sterile and impersonal, there was nothing to provide comfort at the most difficult time of our lives.

Several police guarded Nicky, and we were not allowed to even touch himThen he was taken away I never got to see him again.



Now, two years on our family are still battling with the “**high Quality**” Coronial service to try and get an open and fair inquest into Nicky’s death. We have to face a coronial process dominated by a gaggle of lawyers, bureaucrats and health professionals who want to cover their own butts - and they are all funded by the Crown. Not the family of the person who died, though; they won’t support our family, we have to pay for Nicky to be represented.

It has been my experience to date that the coronial process is more about gagging rather than exposing the truth and I am losing hope of the truth ever ‘officially’ being found in Nicky’s case.

Our family's experience is not isolated; there are many families around the country currently paying the price of our **"high quality"** mental health and justice services. Too many people like Nicky are dying preventable deaths.

This is why it is crucial that we have an independent inquiry into the mental health system in NZ.



R.I.P. Nicholas Taiaroa Macpherson Stevens 1993 - 2015