**EXAMPLE LETTER**

**Please Note: This is a fictional example Letter or Email to a MP, Senator or Candidate**

Ms Alicia Payne MP, Member for Canberra
Via: Alicia.Payne.MP@aph.gov.au

Friday 1 April, 2022

Dear Ms Alicia Payne MP,

My name is Anne, and my 20-year-old son Reece lives with a mental illness. We both live and vote in your electorate of Canberra.

For three years now Reece has been in and out of hospital, and psychiatric care due to his acute mental illness. The access to this care in our hometown of Canberra has been sporadic at best and outside of hospital visits, and in many cases during them, my partner and I are Reece’s full-time carers.

During times of need when Reece is admitted to one of the few beds available for him there is no consistent record of his care nor treatment plan, and for both Reece and us, the constant retelling of his story over the last three years, is often traumatic and only adds to our pain and frustration with the system, or lack of one.

When Reece is well, and when he has regular access to treatment, particularly outside of the inpatient setting, he is a loving son, brother and now uncle. Thankfully we have seen how consistent care can help him manage is illness in a positive way.

When that access or consistency of care disappears, often without warning, his illness impacts us all, and while over the years we’ve managed to work out or adapt to a plan to help Reece, our own plans are worthless unless we can rely on having access to the right care and the right professionals at the right time.

Last year’s Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health said that:

*Consumers and carers should be able to access the services they need when they need them, regardless of administrative or funding structures underpinning them.*

As a family we understand there have been many reviews and recommendations made in recent years to improve the level of community services available for mental health support, but we are yet to see any change to a system that is extremely difficult to navigate and most of the time completely exhausting to deal with. It often causes more harm than does good.

This election we are looking for action and change to ensure Reece, and others, can receive the consistent care they need, and the care that we know can work when it is sustained.

Thank you for taking the time to hear our story and we look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Anne
Anne@gmail.com