
Mother of mentally ill man who killed son speaks out

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The mother of a Sydney man who stabbed and killed his five year old son in a psychotic episode has warned there will be more deaths unless the state's mental health system is repaired.

The man's mother has spoken out in the wake of the Clarence St stabbing attacks last week which left one woman dead and another injured.

Her comments come as the peak body for emergency room doctors said similar attacks could be avoided if governments heed their calls to fix the crisis in hospital emergency departments.

The mother (left) and partner of a mentally ill man who killed his five-year-old son last year. *CREDIT: DOMINIC LORRIMER*

The Carlingford woman - who cannot be named for legal reasons - told the *Sun-Herald* she was prepared to "yell from the mountain tops" until the health system was adequately resourced to treat people like her son.

"I can't stay silent anymore," said the woman, who said the system had failed her family after she came home to find her grandson fatally stabbed dozens of times on the morning of June 8, 2018. The Sydney hospital that turned away the man before the fatal attack in Carlingford last year was beset by a resourcing dispute.

"There are too many unnecessary deaths caused by insufficient places for these people with illnesses to go."

It comes after dramatic scenes in Sydney's CBD last Tuesday in which bystanders subdued Marayong man Mert Ney, 20, after he allegedly murdered 24-year-old Michaela Dunn, whose body was found in a Clarence St apartment, and wounded Lin Bo, 41.

The lawyer for the alleged knifeman said on Saturday his client would be defending a raft of charges against him on mental health grounds as he was refused bail by a Parramatta magistrate.

Mert Ney, accused of murdering 24-year-old Michaela Dunn, was formally refused bail in court on Saturday.*CREDIT:SEVEN NEWS*

Simon Judkins, president of the Australian College of Emergency Medicine, said he was not surprised to learn Mr Ney had spent hours waiting in an emergency room at Blacktown Hospital before absconding the health system.

He said doctors in emergency rooms across the nation were having to make decisions every day about which patients were the "least risky" to release to the public, as state hospitals heaved under the demand for psychiatric services and seriously unwell patients "fall through the cracks".

"We're seeing patients across the system, and it's not just NSW, spending three, four or five days in emergency departments," he said.

The boy's grandmother was treated for shock by paramedics following his death on June 8 last year.*CREDIT:7 NEWS/TWITTER*

NSW Supreme Court judge Peter Hidden last month found the 38-year-old son of the Carlingford woman not guilty of his child's murder because he was in the grip of a psychotic episode. He later told police, "I thought my son was the devil".

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In the weeks before the attack, the man told clinicians he was having auditory hallucinations that were "trying to control him".

Two days before the child's death, the Carlingford man's family tried to have him admitted to Hornsby Hospital but were told there were no beds available.

"I pleaded with that nurse that day to take him in. I said, "if you can't take him in, find somewhere who will'," the mother said.

In the days leading up to the family fronting the hospital, nurses in the mental health intensive care unit closed beds over patient and staff safety fears, amid ongoing concerns they weren't adequately resourced to treat those suffering severe mental health episodes.

NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association general secretary Brett Holmes said the beds were reopened shortly after the decision at management's insistence.

"The system is still under enormous pressure," Mr Holmes said.

A hospital spokesperson said the Northern and Western Sydney Local Health Districts undertook a full investigation into the ongoing care and treatment provided to the man.

"There were no beds closed due to staffing or industrial matters at Hornsby Hospital," the spokesperson said.

Days before the court decision that will see the Carlingford man detained in a psychiatric facility for the foreseeable future, mentally ill St Clair woman Jessica Camilleri allegedly decapitated her mother during a domestic argument.

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The 25-year-old woman, who pleaded for medical attention during her first court appearance following the July 20 incident is now in custody on a charge of murder.

The Carlingford man's mother said that incident, and then last week's CBD fatality, forced her family to relive their trauma over and over.

"Each time we hear anything it just brings back these horrible, horrible thoughts."

She said she felt sympathy for Mr Ney as she watched the dramatic events in the CBD on television: "I felt such sadness for him."

The NSW government announced last week it would review all aspects of Mr Ney's care and treatment leading up to the alleged attacks. Attorney-General Mark

Speakman said the government was looking into how to better connect people with mental illnesses who come into contact with the criminal justice system, with mental health services.

NSW chief psychiatrist Dr Murray Wright said while occasionally things go wrong in the mental health system, it was important to remember that for most patients things go well.

Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt said the Sydney stabbing was "a distressing incident for all involved" and that he and his state and territory counterparts were making mental health and suicide prevention "a national priority" by drawing on "the best experience and learnings across all Australian jurisdictions".

Support is available for those who may be distressed by phoning Lifeline 13 11 14; Mensline 1300 789 978; Kids Helpline 1800 551 800; beyondblue 1300 224 636; National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service 1800 737 732