

Sydney Morning Herald – July 8, 2010

Tough talk on Tasers isn't enough

The police often do not know how to communicate effectively with the mentally ill. For many of our clients, contact with the police is a tense experience. Police with further training in mental health are more able to defuse and direct these contacts in a constructive manner. Tasers, on the other hand, are a blunt instrument - an inherently violent end to a situation.

Tasers should be issued only to police with rigorous additional training in dealing with mentally ill people. We are concerned that the demonstrated unnecessary use of Tasers will serve only to entrench the police in an antagonistic relationship with the mentally ill.

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