

16 June 2011

Open Letter to all NSW Parliamentarians

Parliamentary vote on Brian Maloney

I write today to encourage you to support Brian Maloney and to vote that he retain his position as magistrate.

Brian Maloney lives with and manages the mental illness bipolar disorder. Reports from his treating psychiatrist state that his condition is at the milder end of the spectrum with complete remissions between episodes; he cooperates with treatment and he has been working effectively – making as many as 5,000 sound decisions in a year.

There is no justifiable reason why he cannot continue to work as a magistrate. If Mr Maloney had recovered from a heart attack would he be sacked for fear he would have another heart attack in the future?


Under these circumstances, if the NSW parliament sacks Mr Maloney, it will be sending a very clear message of discrimination to the Australian community – the wrong message, in particular to employers and to the many thousands of Australians living with mental illness who are currently working productively, or who wish to work.

A major consequence is that people will be reluctant to acknowledge their mental illness for fear of losing their job. My preference is to fly with a pilot who is being treated for bipolar disorder, rather than with a pilot who is unwell with bipolar disorder, but is afraid to seek treatment for fear of losing his job.

A vote against Mr Maloney will also undermine many progressive government policies to encourage and support people with a disability or mental illness into work. These include the 2010-13 *EmployABILITY strategy: Increasing employment opportunities for people with a disability in the NSW public sector* which aims to provide meaningful work and varied development opportunities including working in higher roles and access to professional development programs.

I hope the NSW government will show true leadership - a vote to keep Brian Maloney at work will also be a vote to support the health and wellbeing of thousands of other people with mental illness such as bipolar disorder and to keep them at work, all the while making a major contribution to the NSW and Australian economy.

Yours sincerely



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Executive Director

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