

**Submission
No 168**

COMMUNITY SAFETY IN REGIONAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

Name: Mr Tadeusz (Tad) Kiemski

Date Received: 26 May 2024

Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Rural and Regional Crime, Community Safety.

Dear Parliamentary Inquiry

I am writing this submission on behalf of the local committee for the Fair Treatment Campaign.

We have worked for some four years to have a multi-faceted Drug & Alcohol treatment facility/program established in the North West Region of NSW.

I am also the former Regional Manager of Aboriginal Affairs NSW, where for over 12 years, I was responsible for working to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal people and communities extending from the QLD border to the Hunter Valley.

I have first-hand knowledge and experience of the numerous Aboriginal communities, townships, service providers and social issues across this region.

There is no question that Drug & Alcohol abuse are linked to various forms of crime and domestic violence.

We seek to provide a positive and therapeutic option that may assist individuals, their families and friends to overcome destructive behaviors that may lead to criminal and violent activity.

Our region lacks any feasible facility or therapeutic program for this purpose. We are called Fair Treatment as we aim to provide unrestricted access to recovery and treatment for all residents of the North-West Region.

We are only one part of the solution for a very complex and diverse problem that undoubtedly fuels rural & regional crime and community safety issues,

I ask that your committee consider the following recommendations:

- Hold an Inquiry hearing in this region, ideally in Tamworth, as part of your deliberations. Note this has also been called for by our local State MP, Mr. Kevin Anderson.
- Acknowledge Drug & Alcohol abuse as one of the underlying causes for regional crime and community safety issues,

- Include Drug & Alcohol treatment as a key measure to combat crime and community safety issues,
- Consider staging the proposed Rural & Regional Crime and Community Safety Summit in Tamworth. The staging of such a summit has been reported by the media.
- Include Drug & Alcohol abuse as one of the topics to be covered by the Summit,
- Commit to a Regional Drug & Alcohol Treatment facility (as recommended by the Country Mayors Association) to be based in Tamworth
- Take advantage of the current upgrade of Tamworth Hospital by repurposing the Banksia Mental Health Unity for a Regional Drug & Alcohol Treatment facility. The existing Banksia Mental Health Unit is becoming vacant and obsolete in the current hospital upgrade. Note this has also been called for by our local State MP, Mr. Kevin Anderson.
- Provide seed funding and/or a dedicated position (government or community based) for up to 2 years to further and fully develop the service scope, design, specifications and integration with the existing, complementary regional services network.
- We are well aware that our full aspirations for Fair Treatment, as a comprehensive treatment program, will require various streams of fund both State and Federal, but the key starting point would be a detox and initial recovery facility that would be provided by repurposing the existing Banksia Mental Health Unit.

I ask that your committee accept this submission and its recommendation for the benefit of all those impacted by Drug & Alcohol and Community Safety concerns and other residents across the North West Region of NSW.

I am happy to discuss this matter further by phone, email or in person.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tadeusz (Tad) Kiemski

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