

**Submission
No 196**

COMMUNITY SAFETY IN REGIONAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

Name: Mr Greg Edwards

Position: Area Manager

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NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Community Safety into Rural Remote Communities

My name is Greg Edwards and my Role is Area Manager, Youth Justice Far West NSW. My role covers the Far West region which takes in Broken Hill region.

- Some of the drivers of youth crime across regional and rural NSW can be associated with the lack of opportunities in education or access to alternative educational/employment programs within the community.
Drugs and Alcohol usage is also one of the main drivers along with the vulnerabilities and challenges within the home environment. The Youth in rural remote communities often face challenges with education/employment opportunities and access to pre-apprentice TAFE courses.
Wraparound and diversionary services available for youth and families whilst available within the community have a large turnaround of employees due to burnout and lack of experience in working with vulnerable groups.
NSW Police and Youth Justice work together in trying to divert Youth at risk from custody and deliver offence focused programs to reduce their risk of offending. Supports from organisations such as PCYC and local NGO's is imperative in regard to reducing Youth crime in these communities.
- Rural remote communities require wrap around services that are embedded and available in the community for youth at risk of incarceration. Long term support such as rural rehabs along with specialist health services are not available in Rural remote communities and require Youth to leave their community and family for long periods of time to access. There is a lack of crises accommodation services available in Rural Remote regions which limits the alternatives for young people who are unable to return to the family home. Opportunities for youth with complex needs is also limited with access to health and specialist services not available or hard to access.
- A holistic approach to working with Youth at risk and their families from Rural remote communities is required to reduce recidivism rates for Youth in these communities.