

MEDIA RELEASE

INQUIRY INTO THE EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND APPROPRIATE DELIVERY OF OUTPATIENT AND COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CARE IN NEW SOUTH WALES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

4 June 2024

The Upper House committee tasked with inquiring into the equity, accessibility and appropriate delivery of outpatient and community mental health care in New South Wales has tabled its report today.

The Chair of the committee, Dr Amanda Cohn MLC, said 'The committee acknowledges the breadth of evidence presented over the course of the inquiry and is grateful to all those who have shared their stories and experiences. We appreciate the bravery of many people retelling stories of trauma they have survived for the benefit of this inquiry. The committee heard stories from individuals with lived experience, who described the difficulty of navigating the complex and confusing mental health system, as well as carers and family who spoke of supporting their loved ones through their mental health journey. We also heard compelling evidence from those on the front line, including health workers, the community and NGO sector, and those working in the justice system and emergency services who spoke about the difficult choices they are forced to make every day.'

The Chair continued: 'It is clear that NSW's mental health system has become reactive and crisis-driven, and is letting down people seeking help, carers, as well as those working within the mental health sector. This report confirms what advocates have been saying for a long time – the system is chronically underfunded and on the brink of collapse. Immediate action is needed to make sure people can access the care they deserve.'

The committee made 39 recommendations to address the challenges facing the mental health system, including access and navigation of services, pressures on workforce, and emergency responses to mental health crises. The Chair continued: 'Key to these reforms is an immediate increase in funding to mental health care with particular investment in community mental health services to provide early and preventative care.'

The Chair concluded: 'It is unacceptable that it has gotten to this point and we cannot waste any more time - The time for this reform is now.'

The NSW Government will now have three months to respond to the committee's recommendations. The committee's report and other inquiry documents can be found on the [inquiry webpage](#).

-ENDS-

For further information please contact Committee Chair, Dr Amanda Cohn MLC, on (02) 9230 2566.