

**INQUIRY INTO THE PROVISION OF DRUG  
REHABILITATION SERVICES IN REGIONAL, RURAL AND  
REMOTE NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Name:** Mr Grant Mistler

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Partially  
Confidential

Dear Portfolio Committee No. 2

**RE: Inquiry into the Provision of Drug Rehabilitation Services in Regional, Rural and Remote NSW**

Thank you very much for holding this extremely beneficial inquiry. I wish to submit advice to this inquiry, based on my direct and substantial experiences during my time as Public Officer, Treasurer and President for Phoebe House Inc, w

In particular, I wish to address Agenda Item 12 "Current and potential threats to existing rehabilitation services", and draw your attention to the overarching Boards of Governance, that support and drive drug rehabilitation services across NSW, while they are registered with NSW Fair Trading, under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009.

Phoebe House has been operating for 30 years, with an annual budget of \$860,000 from NSW Health. We pay a peppercorn rent to Housing NSW for the house. Phoebe House provides a 6-month residential rehabilitation facility for mothers on Opioid Replacement Therapy, and their infants. After receiving \$8 million in State Government funding over the last 10 years, no evidence-based evaluation into our service provision efficacy has been conducted.

Although we focus on important medical and psychological issues, it is worth noting that to resolve any Board of Governance conflicts of interest, the only legally binding pathway is via the NSW Supreme Court. As an incorporated association providing accommodation services to vulnerable people, while storing and handling their methadone, we are on the same legal footing as any hobby craft charity registered with NSW Fair Trading. This obviously possess a large toxic risk for the State Government, as the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 is a 'one size fits all' model.

For Incorporated Associations generally, there is a lack of transparency in the Register of Members, and in the qualifications and suitability of some people who are elected. No one knows how many Members are personal friends, relatives, alive or real, for example. The Register of Members is not lodged with any independent agency. Substantial State Government funding goes to Boards of Governance containing people who the State Government may not ever employ in AOD positions, unless probity and educational requirements are lowered. This problematic governance structure funded by the State Government, again, places the State Government in a compromised position with an undefendable risk.

For this current inquiry into drug rehabilitation services, would it be possible to request a better legally binding instrument to prevent undischarged bankrupts, and people without a Police Check or a Working With Children Check, from ever holding Board of Governance roles in NSW please? |

I would call this brief instrument "NSW Drug Rehabilitation Service Operating Condition 2018", to minimise basic known risks.

Yours faithfully

Grant Mistler