

**Submission  
No 35**

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

**Organisation:** Orana Regional Organisation of Councils

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26<sup>th</sup> February 2018

**The Hon Greg Donnelly MLC**  
**Chairman**  
**Portfolio Committee No 2 – Health and Community Services Legislative Council**  
**Parliament House**  
**6 Macquarie Street**  
**SYDNEY NSW 2000**

Via Email: [portfoliocommittee2@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:portfoliocommittee2@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Sir

**Submission to the Inquiry into the provision of Drug Rehabilitation Service in Regional,  
Rural and Remote NSW**

I apologise in supplying this late submission. This matter has only recently been brought to my attention.

- The Orana Region is currently supported by a Regional Organisation of Councils namely OROC. Member LGA's include the 12 Councils of Bogan, Bourke, Brewarrina, Cobar, Coonamble, Dubbo Regional, Gilgandra, Narromine, Mid-Western Regional, Warren, Walgett and Warrumbungle.
- The twelve local government areas of OROC have been working together delivering regional level functions for over 20 years which has provided significant savings and other benefits to member councils that have directly benefited local communities.
- OROC has delivered meaningful benefits to the Orana region and has been able to respond to the needs of the region due to its close relationship with each of its communities.
- This area is based on a natural fit of well-established communities of interest that link to the regional centre of Dubbo and relies on the existing and emerging economies, agricultural and mining industries, catchment boundaries, demographics, cultural and heritage connections. The strong contribution of agriculture and mining is a major characteristic of the region.
- The OROC region covers approximately 25% of the geographical area of New South Wales and comprises a diverse environmental landscape with an extensive and complex range of natural resources that covers over 200,000 square kilometres.

- ABS Population statistics show that there are just over 118,000 people residing in the OROC region. The region has a significantly high indigenous population of 21% (average) compared to the NSW state average of 2%.
- Over the last few years the OROC Board has directed its concerns to State Government Ministers in respect to the correlation of illegal drug use and the increase in crime and social issues in all communities across the OROC region. NSW Health has advised OROC representatives, that alcohol remains the most prevalent substance of abuse across this entire region.
- With this in mind, social and crime issues are now at desperate levels in all OROC communities and as such have resulted in the resources of NSW Police, NSW Ambulance and NSW Health services exhausted and as a result cost the entire community.
- As reported by Dubbo Regional Council in its submission to this inquiry, there is a widening gap for courts to impose sentences that require admission and/or participation in appropriate rehabilitation programs for offenders in this region.
- Dubbo is considered the regional service hub for Western NSW and residents travel from rural and remote areas of the region to access services such as health, education and sporting facilities. It is alarming to note the lack of drug and alcohol rehabilitation services that are offered in Dubbo let alone in OROC's rural communities.
- As the socio-economic needs change and intensify in our communities, it is leading towards more targeted services being required.
- OROC supports well-resourced drug and rehabilitation services in all communities across the region, especially in the regional centre of Dubbo.
- I would like to offer my support to the Mayor of Dubbo Regional Council in his invitation to your Committee to conduct a public hearing in Dubbo.

I certainly welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue with the Committee further if the opportunity does arise.

Yours faithfully

Clr Doug Batten  
**Chair**  
**Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC)**  
**Mayor of Gilgandra Shire Council**