

Submission  
No 249

**INQUIRY INTO HEALTH OUTCOMES AND ACCESS TO  
HEALTH AND HOSPITAL SERVICES IN RURAL,  
REGIONAL AND REMOTE NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Organisation:** One Door Mental Health - Great Lakes Mental Health Carer  
Support Group

**Date Received:** 11 December 2020

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## **Mental Health Hub located on the Lower Mid North Coast in the Great Lakes area.**

Currently there are no mental health services in the Great Lakes area other than Community Health which is only available during business hours by referral to a case worker or the Psychiatrist weekly for people on a community treatment order. The closest support service available is Flourish (only for NDIS clients) and Parramatta Mission for those without a NDIS package, located in Taree. The travel time for people living in the Great Lakes area can vary from ½ hour to 1 1/2 hours by car. No train service is available in the great lakes and bus services are very limited. The nearest mental health hub is at Port Macquarie which comes under a different area health service.

We urgently need supports for people living in the Great Lakes area. Our area seems to be overlooked when it comes to receiving support. We envisage a service delivered by mental health professionals including allied support and peer workers to engage with those seeking help within the hub and also by outreach. The proposed service would develop strong links with local GP's through the local GP Network, community mental health teams and other community based organisations to ensure that clients of the service are holistically provided with a wraparound service.

- Prevention and early intervention for people before they reach the situation of being in crisis
- Help when needed to reduce ED presentations.
- Support services within our local community for the people who need them
- A community health drop in centre where a mental health practitioner is available to assess a person if they have any mental health issues or need their medication reviewed.
- A place for people to go who are in need of mental health support but do not meet the criteria for to go into the mental health unit. (We hear of so many people being turned away from ED).
- A link in service to direct consumers and carers to GP's and services in our area who can offer specific mental health assistance.
- Ongoing support following ED presentations
- A more relaxed atmosphere for Community Health appointments with Case workers or psychiatrist
- Psychosocial support services to help people live within their communities.

- Activities to maintain wellness
- Suicide prevention education and support
- Mental Health education
- Holistic approach to mental wellbeing
- One stop place for provision of assistance or support in our community for mental health needs
- Improve people's experiences and outcomes with mental healthcare
- Improve people's experiences with services beyond the health system
- A place to receive skills for employment
- Peer support
- Showers available for those living with a mental illness who have no accommodation
- **A venue addressing the communities immediate needs before waiting on the outcome of the current limited pilot program for mental health hubs trial**
- Population at 2016 census **31,272**

Description of the Area: **Great Lakes** Local Government Area covers an area of 3,373 square kilometres and is situated on the Lower Mid North Coast of **NSW**. It is 320 kilometres north of Sydney and 168 kilometres north of Newcastle. **Great Lakes** Council Area has a **population** of 31,384 (ABS 2001 Census).

### **Productivity Commission Report**

Reducing the 'missing middle' gap between mental healthcare services needed by people with mental illness.

Mental health is important to everyone. Although it means different things to different people at different points in their life, the capacity to enjoy life, cope with and be resilient in response to stress, set and fulfil goals, and build and maintain relationships are key aspects of being mentally healthy and participating in the community. (volume 2, p. 8)



**A community hub where everyone can come together**