

**Submission
No 1**

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

Name: Mr Grant Mistler

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Dear Portfolio Committee No.2 – Health

RE: Inquiry into Equity, Accessibility and Appropriate Delivery of Outpatient and Community Mental Health Care in New South Wales

Thank you kindly for working collaboratively and focusing on mental health across NSW this year. I am very pleased this inquiry has now begun. Last year I petitioned the NSW Parliament to begin this inquiry this year, and Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile kindly presented my petition in parliament on 21 December 2022.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the ground-breaking 1983 Richmond Report, and it has also been 20 years since the last inquiry into the NSW mental health landscape. This inquiry is well overdue given the changes that have occurred since 2003. Modern challenges such as: surviving the COVID disruption period, the advent of cyberbullying and online trolling, the inhumanity of Robodebt, the fallout of pokies and unfettered gambling destroying our finances and our live music industry, and the scourge of ice addiction. All of these concepts were unknown 20 years ago at the last mental health inquiry, but all of which have assailed NSW negatively over the past five years.

To this end, I wish to bring your attention to the “NSW 2021: A Plan to Make NSW Number One” document,¹ it was a ten-year NSW State plan developed in 2011. That State Plan specifically mentions mental health in Goals 11, 13 and 17. There was also an earlier “A New Direction for NSW State Plan” developed in 2006.² Our latest State Plan was supposed to be evaluated and then lead into co-producing a revised State Plan for release in 2021. Unfortunately, we have now been without a clear State Plan for many years, and NSW urgently needs a new concrete State Plan developed to turn our minds and our agencies towards achieving long-term goals together.

May I also bring your attention to the new National Safety and Quality Mental Health Standards for Community Managed Organisations (CMOs) that will start in 2024 please? These new standards from the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care aim to provide safety and quality assurance for community mental health services users, and best practice guidance for service providers and developers. I would like to ask this committee to consider how this inquiry will actively support CMOs to become fit-for-future against those new standards, and what types of supports CMOs may need in 2024 to align themselves against those new standards, and to thrive?

To conclude, my three recommendations here today are: review our progress and failures from the 1983 and the 2003 inquiries into mental health; focus on how we will meet the upcoming National Safety and Quality Mental Health Standards; and solidify our collective learnings and our future goals into a comprehensive ten-year NSW State Plan with actionable targets that sees a system-wide circle of support.

I warmly look forward to following your achievements and hearing your insights throughout your journey this year.

Yours faithfully

Grant Mistler

¹ www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/file_manager/NSW2021_WEBVERSION.pdf

² <http://ict-industry-reports.com.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2013/10/2006-NSW-State-Plan-Consultation-Draft.pdf>