

Submission  
No 160

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

**Organisation:** Human Nature  
**Date Received:** 27 October 2023

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Greens MP Amanda Cohn

Dear Amanda

**RE: NSW Parliament Mental Health Inquiry**

Human Nature is a youth mental health not-for-profit organization supporting 14-18 year olds living in a regional area. We see first hand the urgent need for specific focus on the unmet mental health needs of rural and regional young people.

We have experienced a 200% increase in demand for our services since the 2022 floods. One off Government grants have allowed us to increase our capacity to meet some of that need however these grants have been exhausted and the need continues to grow.

We are seeing young people who have increasingly complex mental health needs (persistent intrusive trauma symptoms from multiple disasters and the effects of the pandemic, suicidality, eating disorders and addictions) and who are unable to access timely, affordable, accessible, engaging, youth specific mental health support.

We are receiving increasing referrals from government agencies such as NSW Health, Juvenile Justice, schools and the Department of Communities and Justice. These are young people for whom trauma is the gateway to the child protection and criminal justice systems and for whom current service models are insufficient and ineffective at changing this dire (and costly) life trajectory.

We need a Regional Hearing to understand the specific needs of rural and regional NSW and to develop a plan to deliver equitable, accessible, and appropriate mental health care to all of our residents.

I urge the New South Wales Government to hold a Regional Hearing for Equity, Accessibility and Appropriate Delivery of Outpatient and Community Mental Health Care in New South Wales. It is time to give our regional populations the support to ensure that everyone has access to the mental health care they deserve.

Yours sincerely

Relieving Chief Executive Officer  
Jennifer Parke