



Kevin Humphries MP

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Healthy Lifestyles

Minister for Western NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

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IMPROVING ACCESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The rights of people being treated for a mental health condition involuntarily under the Mental Health Act have been significantly strengthened as a result of a key reform introduced last year by the NSW Government, Minister for Mental Health Kevin Humphries announced today.

Mr Humphries said data demonstrated that as a result of the Government's commitment hundreds more people are receiving a review of their involuntarily detention much more quickly.

"Last year a report found the delay in the time before people were appearing before the Mental Health Review Tribunal was jeopardising their basic rights and causing considerable stress and uncertainty," Mr Humphries said.

"People who come before the Tribunal are often some of the most vulnerable people in our communities and the former Labor Government's failure to properly implement these changes meant that people's rights were not properly upheld.

"When I released the report last year I made a commitment to turn this around and announced an additional \$400,000 per year to improve the Tribunal's capacity to conduct inquiries in a timely manner.

"It is very pleasing that as a result of this commitment the NSW Government has made a real difference to the lives of people at a time when they need help most.

"Because of the action we have taken almost three-quarters of people are now seen in less than two weeks, compared to one-quarter a year ago, while the number of people waiting for more than three weeks has dropped from 27 per cent to just above two per cent," Mr Humphries said.

President of the Mental Health Review Tribunal, Professor Dan Howard, said the funding delivered by the NSW Government has improved the rights of mental health consumers and enhanced the Tribunal's capacity to conduct Inquiries in a timely manner.

"The funding has greatly increased the Tribunal's capacity to see more people more quickly and drive a more accountable and efficient system," Professor Howard said.