



Inquiry into the forensic division of the NSW Mental Health Review Tribunal Announced

TODAY, Advocacy Australia welcomed the announcement by the NSW Government that it would honour the *Justice for Bidy Porter E Petition* by formally announcing an inquiry into the forensic division of the NSW Mental Health Review Tribunal, 597 days after Independent Member for Orange, Philip Donato MP presented the E petition for debate in New South Wales Parliament.

As part of Advocacy Australia's *Justice for Bidy Porter* campaign, thanks to the support of Mr Donato, the *Justice for Bidy Porter* e-petition called for a coronial inquest into the circumstances surrounding Brigette "Biddy" Porters death and Parliamentary Inquiries including into the Mental Health Review Tribunal's (MHRT) lack of transparency and accountability in its dealings with victims of heinous crimes when attending 6-monthly tribunal hearings.

Clare Collins, Chair of Advocacy Australia said, "The MHRT have operated autonomously behind tightly closed doors for far too long whereby the victims and families of killers under the authority of the tribunal have frequently said they've been made to feel more like criminals than the victims of heinous crimes.

Over 20,000 people from across NSW and 1500 outside NSW, signed our NSW Government E petition, addition their voices to ours and Mr Donato's calling for the Minns Government to meet community expectations and hold an inquiry into the operations of the MHRT.

"The chasm of inequity between the rights of victims of murderous crimes and the perpetrators is vast so in what is a first for NSW, we hope this inquiry into the MHRT will be a significant benchmark in creating essential change that helps all victims of serious crimes including Bidy's loved ones," she said.

Mr Philip Donato, Independent Member for Orange said, "On 27 March 2026, I formally called for an inquiry into the MHRT following a series of deeply concerning incidents involving forensic patients in the community and ongoing concerns about the treatment of victims including Bidy's loved ones," Mr Donato said.

"I am pleased that the Law and Safety Committee has now agreed to my request, ensuring these important matters will be subject to parliamentary scrutiny reflecting the sustained advocacy to ensure the concerns of victims, families and the wider community are properly heard and examined.

"The inquiry will provide an opportunity to assess whether the current system is meeting community expectations and delivering an appropriate balance between the interests of forensic patients and registered victims.

"It is essential that any shortcomings are identified and addressed so that the MHRT and other relevant agencies can improve service delivery, transparency, strengthen community safety and ensure victims' needs and concerns receive fair and comprehensive consideration," said Mr Donato.

All interested stakeholders are encouraged to make a submission and contribute to this important review before submissions close on 6 July 2026.

For more information please visit [Inquiry into the forensic division of the NSW Mental Health Review Tribunal](#)

The Coronial Inquest into Bridgette "Biddy" Porters death is from 15-19 June 2026 at the NSW Coroners Court.
-ENDS-

HASHTAGS

#Justice4BiddyPorter #Justice4Biddy #JusticeForBiddy #Petition #NSWDPP #VictimsOfCrime #MHRT

INTERVIEW REQUESTS

- Phil Donato MP: Mr Brett Cooke - E: Brett.Cooke@parliament.nsw.gov.au M: 0439 210 396
- Clare Collins: Advocacy Australia - E: media@advocacyaustralia.org.au M: 0414 821 957
- **Media Centre** – Vision & photographs : <https://bit.ly/AdOz-MHRT-Inquiry>

JOURNALIST NOTES: MORE INFORMATION & LINKS

Inquiry into the forensic division of the NSW Mental Health Review Tribunal

This inquiry has been established to examine the current operations of the forensic division of the NSW Mental Health Review Tribunal (MHRT), including its approach to case management. The inquiry will also consider the impact of recent legislative and policy changes on the work of the Tribunal.

Please note that the inquiry will look at systemic process issues and is not reconsidering the Tribunal's decisions about specific individual matters.

Interested parties can lodge a submission by **Monday, 6 July 2026** via the NSW Government website. The Committee can be contacted about this inquiry please email: lawsafety@parliament.nsw.gov.au

THE PETITION - #Justice4BiddyPorter - justice4biddyporter.com

Advocacy Australia launched an NSW Parliament e-petition supported by Philip Donato MP, Independent Member for Orange. The petition that now has the required 20,000 signatures calls for Parliamentary Inquiries into the NSW Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Mental Health Review Tribunal, essential reforms to Department of Communities and Justice Victims' Services, and a Coronial Inquest into the circumstances surrounding Bridgette "Biddy" Porter's death. **LINK: #Justice4BiddyPorter - E-Petition:** <https://advocacyaustralia.org.au/justice4biddyporter/>

ABOUT ADVOCACY AUSTRALIA - advocacyaustralia.org.au

In June 2023, Rebekah approached Advocacy Australia appealing for support. Advocacy Australia aims to promote and defend the rights of victims of serious crimes and the families who've been affected by horrific circumstances such as murder, suspicious disappearance and abduction, and works to uphold their right to the truth, redress, protection and to be treated with respect and understanding.

The services provided to Rebekah and Dominic are completely un-funded. All are conducted in a pro-bono capacity by Board Directors, Clare Collins (Chair) and Alice Collins (Secretary). To continue to provide support for victims such as Rebekah and Dominic, funding is desperately needed. A registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission, Advocacy Australia has tax-deductibility status with the ATO.

ABOUT PHILIP DONATO MP - phildonato.com.au

- **Member of the Legislative Assembly**
- **Member for Orange**
- **Independent**
- **Chair, Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission**
- **Member, Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety**

Philip Donato has served as a member of the New South Wales Parliament since 2016, having first secured the seat of Orange at the November 2016 by-election. To win the seat he broke the National Party hold, which had lasted for nearly 70 years. Phil was convincingly re-elected at the 2019 election and after running as an independent for the first time he won the March 2023 election with a 6.7% swing in his favour.

As an independent Phil enjoys a good relationship with both sides of parliament but ultimately his goal is to ensure the communities of the Orange electorate are well represented. Prior to pursuing politics, Phil served in the NSW police force for 22 years. His career in the police force started in 1995 working around South-West Sydney and the Illawarra.

In 1997 Phil was seconded to Operation Puccini to control the gang and heroin trade in Cabramatta following the political assassination of local MP John Newman.

In 2001 Phil joined to the Police Prosecutions branch and in 2005 he transferred to Orange. Phil's journey has been shaped by opportunities and a dedication to service. After a 22-year career in the Force, he embraced a new chapter when invited to run for the seat of Orange. Embracing this challenge, Phil saw it as a chance to offer better representation

for regional communities. His diverse background equips him with a broad knowledge base and a deep understanding of the people he serves.

A firm believer in the power of community and individual responsibility, Phil has always been committed to helping others. This desire to contribute to his community unexpectedly steered him toward a political path. His experience has honed his ability to look beyond conflicts, engage in meaningful debates, and foster collaborative engagement. Politics, for Phil, is not just about discussing what matters; it's about being actively involved in shaping it.

A real family man, Phil and his wife Nadia have five adult sons and enjoy plenty of outdoor recreation, sport, and good food. Phil's family migrated from Italy nearly a century ago and he grew up in Western Sydney where his parents were market gardeners and ran Donato's Fruit Market. Phil credits his love of community and food to his Italian heritage.

BIDDY'S PARENT'S AUTHORITY TO RELEASE INFORMATION TO MEDIA

The information, photographs and vision made available to media for publication were issued by Advocacy Australia with the full consent of Bridgette "Biddy" Porter's senior available next of kin - Rebekah Porter (mother) and Dominic Porter (father), for publication under section 15E of the *Children's (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987 (NSW) - 15E Exception where child deceased (1) This Division does not prohibit the publication or broadcasting of the name of a deceased child with the consent of a senior available next of kin of the child.*

Media are advised that some information about the case is suppressed including the injuries Bridgette "Biddy" Porter suffered, the identity of her killer, and three (3) Victim Impact Statements that are not those of Biddy's parents. In authorising the release and distribution of information relating to Biddy's identity, Rebekah Porter, Dominic Porter and Advocacy Australia are not authorising the publication or distribution in any form, of any information about the case that is otherwise suppressed under the *Courts Suppression and Non-Publication Orders Act 2019 (NSW)* or the *Children's (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987 (NSW)*.