

**Submission
No 11**

SUPPORT FOR RURAL AND REGIONAL LEARNER DRIVERS

Name: Mr Robert Cox

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My name is Robert Cox and I am a qualified Driving Instructor who has been instructing children for over 40 years in Coonabarabran. During my time as an instructor our community was able to access driver testing once a week every week and during school holidays if there was a requirement the testing would occur twice in those weeks.

During COVID19 like many other places our facility was shut down in accordance with government regulations. After the restrictions were lifted our Service NSW Centre in Coonabarabran under the Dubbo Regional Service NSW Centre the driver testing did not recommence straight away and our children were made to travel to Narrabri, Coonamble, Walgett, Gilgandra and Dubbo to complete their driver testing rather than completing it in their home/closest town of Coonabarabran. The travel distance to these places ranged from 100 kilometers to over 200 kilometers just to access the basic driver testing facilities. When testing commenced again in Coonabarabran it was only spasmodically and more recently we have been moved to one day per fortnight with our children not being able to book an actual appointment they are put on a waiting list which could extend out for over six weeks.

As a country town that service the smaller communities of Baradine, Binnaway, Premer and other surrounding towns we need to have the more regular service of driver testing back at once a week.

I have contacted my local members who have been helpful and have tried their best to get the facility changed back to once a week but the service has again continued to be once a fortnight or longer. I have spoken to the Dubbo Service NSW Center without any success.

With Driver testing being held once a fortnight this equates to approximately 6 testing slots in that one day. This is for both the young and the elderly testing and is so far under the minimum requirements for our community that many people miss out and have to travel extra distances out of the community, costing families significantly increased costs associated with trying to obtain or keep a drivers licence that it is becoming ridiculous.

Why are government organisations cutting back basic testing facilities that had been working well, being constantly supported and always booked out when they were set at once a week to now restricting this to once a fortnight or longer for the same service.

Country communities are being significantly disadvantaged by the services that are being cut back by government organisations, smaller towns are reducing at a rate of knots due to the diminished services.

Country communities need to have the services of Driver Testing as we have no public transport available and our children need to have their licences to travel larger distances to basic facilities including schools, doctors, specialists and entertainment. Our county children have as much right to access services as their counterparts in larger regional and city centres.