

**Submission  
No 41**

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE No. 2  
RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO WORKFORCE ISSUES, WORKPLACE  
CULTURE AND FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS FOR REMOTE, RURAL AND  
REGIONAL HEALTH**

**Organisation:** Bland Shire Council

**Date Received:** 12 October 2023



**BLAND SHIRE COUNCIL**  
*west wyalong*

4 October 2023

Our Ref: 792614

The Chair  
Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Attn: Dr Joe McGirr

Dear Joe

**RE: Portfolio Committee No.2 Recommendations**

Council wishes to thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Select Committee in regard to Remote, Rural and Regional Health.

Council and the community are concerned about antenatal and postnatal care in the Bland Shire.

Recommendation 14

*That a lack of regional Patient Transport Services is being supplemented by Ambulance NSW, resulting in paramedics frequently attending patients who do not require emergency care and reducing Ambulance NSW's capacity to respond to emergencies, and that this comes at great cost to patient and paramedic safety*

Recommendation 29

*That NSW Health in conjunction with NSW Ambulance:*

- *undertake a community profiling program across rural, regional and remote New South Wales to identify the paramedic needs of communities*
- *ensure the equitable distribution of paramedics at all levels, including Extended Care and Intensive Care Paramedics and update ambulance deployment modelling to reflect present day demand, ensuring that ambulances are deployed as rostered*
- *expand the Intensive Care and Extended Care Paramedics program across rural, regional and remote New South Wales and allow paramedics outside metropolitan areas to undertake training, skills consolidation and skills maintenance locally*
- *explore innovative models of care utilising the skill sets of paramedics to better support communities that lack primary health care services, including consideration of embedding paramedics at facilities that do not have access to a doctor*
- *undertake a review of the efficacy of the current call triaging system and referral services.*

A recent article in the Daily Telegraph highlights the deficiencies that continue in patient transport between district and major regional hospitals, and the need for more Intensive Care Paramedics and beds. In this instance an ambulance had to travel from Wagga Wagga to Wyalong District Hospital for retrieval of a critically ill patient, due to locally based ambulances responding to other matters. In another situation also in September, a critically ill patient was reportedly suggested by Wyalong Hospital to return home as there were no ICU beds in Wagga. The patient was finally flown from Calvary Hospital Wagga to Sydney for surgery.

Recommendation 16

*That NSW Health expedite its review of the nursing and midwifery workforce with a view to urgently increasing nurse and midwifery staffing numbers based on local need across rural, regional and remote New South Wales. The outcome should ensure there are staffing levels that enable optimal patient care and for that care to be delivered in a professionally, physically and psychologically safe environment. NSW Health should publicly report on an annual basis its performance in meeting this outcome.*

Since the midwifery service at the West Wyalong District Hospital ceased in approximately 2001, expectant mothers have been forced to arrange for their confinement for delivery at centres which are a considerable distance from their place of residence, increasing levels of anxiety amongst expectant parents and their families. This also results in families having to bear a greater financial burden.

There is a level of care provided by some Local GPs, however this care is only a small part of what a Midwifery Clinic or Obstetrician would provide. In addition, families are expected to travel to either Forbes, Temora, Griffith or Wagga Wagga for confinement. With a minimum travel time of 45 minutes this is not ideal whether it be for a routine appointment, or a straightforward labour. Such a scenario becomes even more unacceptable should the pregnancy experience complications.

In today's modern society there is a level of expectation in regard health services to a community, and the concerns raised may also present as a deterrent to young families considering settling in the district.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate in contacting me,



Grant Baker  
General Manager