

**Submission  
No 11**

**HEALTH SERVICES AMENDMENT (SPLITTING OF THE HUNTER NEW  
ENGLAND HEALTH DISTRICT) BILL 2025**

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date Received:** 17 March 2025

Partially  
Confidential

I have had occasion to attend Inverell Hospital for a colonoscopy re cancer. The nearest specialist is in Tamworth, two hours drive. He also performs procedures in Inverell hospital. He asked that the hospital schedule me for within three months.

I rang the hospital to see why I had not been given a date NINE months later. Reason given was no anaesthetist! No reason for not letting me know. They then gave me a date few weeks later for admission. Several local GPs are qualified anaesthetists.

The date was not possible as I had an appointment with [REDACTED], an ENT specialist in Coffs Harbour, for which I had already waited months. That was before Christmas. I had tried to get an appointment with the Hunter/New England ENT specialist but first available appointment was for May!

So Inverell Hospital rescheduled me to 24 February, a waiting time of over twelve months! As a side issue, Coffs Harbour Hospital, on a three month schedule, have, when I inquired after the three months, informed me I would probably be six months or more extra wait! For a ten minute procedure!

As well, the Inverell Hospital has an emergency department which often has no doctor. The Hunter/New England health apparently consider Armidale, over an hours drive away, to be sufficient! Ambulance officers are forced to deliver babies on the way! Every GP in Inverell is qualified to deliver babies, but it is cheaper to put the pregnant mother and her child at risk than to cover a local GP for the insurance! I, with cynicism, note that ambulance is a different budget!

Hunter Health Service has no interest in New England, won't provide obstetrics or anaesthetists even though they are available locally! As to the ambulances, they are also being put at risk. Given the number of kangaroos alone, it is a perilous trip for 100 plus kilometres, more so if road conditions, traffic, mechanical failure and stray stock are factored in, and fatigue with overworked ambulance drivers.

Country people's access to health services is vital! Centralisation of services can be useful, but failure to provide necessary services in larger towns is unacceptable!