

**Submission
No 29**

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

Name: Mr Brian Leslie

Date Received: 25 March 2025

Hon Brendan Moylan MP
Parliament Houser Sydney

Honourable Sir,

I have read with interest the Bill in which it is proposed that the current Hunter New England Health be split into (a) Hunter Local Health District, and (b) New England North West Local Health District.

During the lengthy period of discussion leading to the amalgamation of various Local Government Areas in NSW, I was an outspoken opponent of the proposed amalgamation of Uralla Shire with Armidale-Dumaresq Region. The Mayor of Uralla invited me to address the Boundaries Commission during its visit to Armidale, expressing my opposition to the proposal. I am proud to be able to report that the proposed amalgamation did not happen!

At the heart of my opposition was my inherent opposition to the concept that “bigger and centralised are better”. Certainly, as with nearly any concept, this concept does bring some benefits, but, overall, I am convinced that centralisation of control over the provision of services leads to, potentially, a more cumbersome, bureaucratic, organisation, and the perception, probably validly, in the public arena, that control, and accountability, are more remote.

Larger organisations can become more cumbersome, and less able to respond to local needs. An example of this occurred a few years ago. A person with whom I am acquainted was admitted to hospital. This person has various dietary requirements, which, if their hospitalisation had occurred a few years earlier, there would have been a kitchen in the Armidale Hospital, with an attendant Dietitian, who could have devised a suitable diet. By the time they were in hospital, the kitchen in Armidale Hospital had been closed, and all meals were being transported from Newcastle. It was necessary for visiting friends to go off-campus to a nearby take-away to buy a suitable meals.

I believe that the residents of the proposed New England North West Region would be far better served in their health needs by an organisation that is administered by one based nearby in either Tamworth or Armidale, rather than in distant Newcastle.

I strongly urge you to support the Bill.

Respectfully,
Brian Leslie,

