

**Submission
No 73**

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

Organisation: Wee Waa Hospital Auxiliary

Date Received: 22 April 2025

Dear NSW Parliament (Splitting the Hunter New England Health District Bill Committee)

The Wee Waa Hospital Auxiliary members would like to make note of the following issues that are of concern to us and the community. We call for a split of the health services.

- A closed health service (even a reduced service) would have significant impacts on the residents of Wee Waa and their ability to have access to safe and speedy treatment.
- We have had several babies born along the side of the road, as it is too far to travel for many who live on farms and small communities. This can take up to an hour on good days and more than an hour during wet periods.
- The health area around Wee Waa is large and there are numerous roads (tar and gravel) which need to be navigated, as well as wildlife such as kangaroos that need to be considered when driving. These can delay and cause serious injury. Having minimal or no health services nearby mean rural people in the Wee Waa area have reduced health services and are not given the same access as every other NSW resident.
- A further reduction of supports for local indigenous Australians whose cultural needs are not considered or reflected in any decision to close or limit health services in the area. Local indigenous people prefer to stay near family and their lands which help them recover more efficiently. I would like to make note of the Closing the Gap targets which would be ignored if Wee Waa continues to struggle with its health services under a combined Hunter New England Service.

The following closing the gap targets are not able to be met with the closing of the hospital.

1. Target 1: Everyone enjoys long and healthy lives
2. Target 2: Children are born healthy and strong
3. Target 4: Children thrive in their early years
4. Target 13: Families and households are safe
5. Target 14: People enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing
6. Target 15: People maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters
7. Target 17: People have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives.

We ask that the committee seriously consider our concerns which are not unreasonable considered others across the state have access to health services.

Yours Sincerely

Andrew Dewson

Wee Waa Hospital Auxiliary Member