

**Submission  
No 102**

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

**Organisation:** Australian Food & Fibre

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Caroline Hopley  
Director Committees, Parliament of NSW  
[communityservices@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:communityservices@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Caroline,

I am writing to offer my full support for the submission made by the Save Wee Waa Hospital Committee in relation to the Health Services Amendment (Splitting of the Hunter New England Health District) Bill 2025.

My name is Joe Robinson, and I am the Managing Director of Australian Food & Fibre (AFF), a longstanding and leading producer of Australian cotton based in Moree, NSW.

My team and I are deeply invested in the wellbeing of the Wee Waa community — not only because it contributes significantly to the success of our business, but because many of my valued employees and growers live and work there.

Access to timely, high-quality healthcare, particularly in emergency situations, should not be considered a luxury reserved for metropolitan areas. It is a basic necessity that my employees and their families and the wider community should be able to count on, regardless of where they live.

I found it extremely disheartening to read the Committee's submission, which outlined the reduction of services at Wee Waa Hospital — most concerningly, the closure of what was once a highly functioning emergency department after 5:30pm. To me, this demonstrates that the current structure of the Hunter New England Local Health District is failing rural communities like Wee Waa.

With such a vast region to manage, it is clear that this centralised model cannot adequately respond to the healthcare needs of remote areas, even moreso in areas where operations extend beyond standard business hours.

While our business has extensive safety measures in place to protect our staff, accidents can still happen — and I am disappointed that I must question whether my employees would receive quality, efficient medical care if they ever needed it.

It is clear that these reduced services and unsafe delays in emergency care are having a ripple effect on the Wee Waa community, our workforce, and the broader rural economy. This issue must be addressed.

A dedicated New England North West Health District, as proposed by the Save Wee Waa Hospital Committee, would provide a more localised and accountable structure — one that understands and can respond to the challenges faced by rural hospitals like Wee Waa's.

I strongly urge the Committee to recommend this Bill and to stand with rural communities in their call for a fair and functional healthcare system. This is not just wanted — it is urgently needed.

Kind regards,

Joe Robinson



Managing Director, Australian Food & Fibre