



## Murrumbidgee COUNCIL

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31 May 2021

Hon Greg Donnelly, MLC  
Chair  
Upper House Committee  
NSW Rural Health Inquiry  
Parliament House  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir

### **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS - INQUIRY INTO HEALTH OUTCOMES AND ACCESS TO HEALTH AND HOSPITAL SERVICES IN RURAL, REGIONAL AND REMOTE NEW SOUTH WALES**

#### **Question 1**

In addition to what is contained in your submission and evidence provided at the public hearing, do you have any further comments regarding the current provision of palliative medicine, nursing and aged care in rural, regional and remote NSW?

#### **Answer:**

The tyranny of distance makes accessing and supporting those requiring palliative medical and nursing intervention challenging. Palliative care has many symmetries with advanced aged care. These patients/residents are most definitely best supported in familiar settings, collectively supported by medical/nursing staff and family and friends.

Our smaller hospitals and MPS's are able to deliver their care and support if adequately supported by regional and district health facilities, with local GP and specialist collaboration.

Team delivery will ensure that the person is the priority – this is one of NSW Health's strategic pillars – “person centred care”.

Technology and defined pathways that are able to be delivered in a timely and safe manner are the desirable outcome.

Outreach support is essential if this shared case pathway is chosen by the patient.

Resourcing this option with new initiatives will only enhance and strengthen this mobile and accessible addition to these pressing and ever increasing service demands.

Telehealth needs to be prioritised and further resourced as its level of connectedness and timeliness will allow us that intervention that supports our patients as best we can.

The three significant challenges that support these comments are:

1. Reliable connectivity
2. Accessible transport
3. Adequately resourced trained Health and Allied Health professionals.

## **Question 2**

In addition to what is contained in your submission and evidence provided at the Public Hearing, do you have any further comments regarding ways to improve both the access and availability of palliative medicine, nursing and care in rural, regional and remote NSW.

### **Answer**

In response to the above question, it is necessary to have the required workforce to deliver maximum quality care in our areas.

I believe that too frequently the specialist model of training for both doctors and nurses excludes rural and remote health service sites from becoming practical training grounds for our graduates.

We are well aware that small rural facilities and MPS's have a limited service remit.

However, a graduate nurse would gain invaluable insight and practical experience in a rural setting across many disciplines while being supervised by a suitably qualified Health Service Manager, with valuable input from the GP/VMO. The delivery of palliative care in a nurturing and familiar environment sits fairly and squarely in this scenario.

Suitably supervised by multi-generational, experienced nurses and working collaboratively with community invested GP's, on call ambulance/paramedics and many allied health professionals, hopefully digitally connected to specialist care and regional acute ED's, could only enhance the graduate's first time exposure.

It would be a "win win" for our small communities.

It would address the shortfall of health professionals everywhere west of the Blue Mountains.

It would allow not only first-hand clinical involvement, but exposure to day to day administration/reporting compliance when working across the ED, community health, aged care, acute, medical and palliative roles.

It would also clearly demonstrate the role that the community plays in supporting and promoting our rural health services.

I am sure this would require lateral thinking and bring very much into focus the “one size model of training and resourcing does not best serve all of the people”.

At the end of the day, our communities will only survive if we are able to sustain the most appropriate level of service for those of us in rural Australia.

Yours faithfully

RUTH McRAE  
**MAYOR**