

24 June 2021

The Hon. Greg Donnelly, BEc MIR MLC  
Chair

Dear Sir

**Supplementary Submission to Parliamentary Inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote NSW**

Thank you for the opportunity afforded to Bathurst Regional Council to participate in the public hearing of the Parliamentary Inquiry at Wellington on 18 May. Myself and Council's Director Environmental, Planning & Building Services, Neil Southorn, appeared at the hearing.

Firstly, Mr Southorn and I confirm the transcript of the hearing as a true and accurate record.

As foreshadowed at the time and encouraged by some of the Committee members, please find **attached** a supplementary submission on behalf of Council. There are two areas of focus in the supplementary submission. The first provides additional data that has been analysed since Council's first submission, which was verbally summarised at the hearing in Wellington but now provided in a more formal format. The second is to expand on the theme in the first submission "Something not right in the System", a theme which appears consistent with the submissions of other stakeholders, including from Warrumbungle Shire Council Deputy Mayor Dr Iannuzzi who also presented at the hearing in Wellington. Dr Iannuzzi has been reported in the print media. Because his commentary is closely aligned with the position of Bathurst Regional Council, I have taken the liberty of **attaching** the article for the information of the Committee.

Council was also asked supplementary questions in relation to palliative care services in Bathurst. I am advised that additional resources have been made available to palliative care services in the Western LHD area, including Bathurst, as part of the NSW Health End Of Life Palliative Care Framework 2019-2024. This is a welcome and necessary start to improving this essential service, one that helps retain the dignity of patients. Unfortunately, Council cannot say the same for other services.

I also include below a recent case that has been brought to my attention, this one dealing with maternity services. The message below is self explanatory.

*I had an unsatisfactory experience as a patient of the Bathurst Hospital in March 2021.*

*Just to let you know I have already submitted a written complaint about my experience to both Bathurst Hospital and NSW Health. I have not received a*

written reply, but have had a meeting with a Hospital Doctor and have also spoken by phone with Bathurst Hospitals Complaints officer. I felt like they listened to me and although they apologised and acknowledged the need to do better, they also placed blame on a lack of resources and I feel that nothing is going to change.

The complaints I submitted provided details related to my personal circumstances so below is the information I think is relevant for what you are doing with getting better services in Bathurst.

Bathurst Hospital has a Early Pregnancy Assessment Service (EPAS) for women experiencing miscarriage.

The relevant NSW Health Policy Directive: Maternity - Management of Early Pregnancy Complications is at:  
[https://www1.health.nsw.gov.au/pds/ActivePDSDocuments/PD2012\\_022.pdf](https://www1.health.nsw.gov.au/pds/ActivePDSDocuments/PD2012_022.pdf)

Bathurst Hospital doesn't comply as outlined with my experience below.

On the afternoon of Thursday 11/3/21 my husband and I heard the words "I'm sorry there is no heartbeat".

I was told it was too late in the day about 4pm to see a doctor or someone in the pregnancy clinic and I would have to wait until the next week. I waited five days until the next EPAS clinic., which are only run on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Section 2 of the policy directive states "...EPAS should be available on a daily basis during the normal working week, and if possible, services available on weekends and after hours"

Additionally Section 2 also states:  
"Standardised patient information leaflets, referral and transfer of care (discharge) letters must also be readily available, utilised, and regularly reviewed"

I never received any such information. When following this up with Bathurst Hospital I was informed that they do not have any patient information sheets.

So in searching for this information myself I also found that the WNSWLHD website contains no EPAS or miscarriage details and is also lacking information in a number of other areas, it's crazy that there is almost no patient information on our LHD area website compared to other NSW LHDs.

Example of good information that Bathurst EPAS clinic could have is at:  
[https://www.wslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/1374/Miscarriage%20Management%20Options%20patient%20info%20sheet\\_updated%20April%202019.pdf.aspx](https://www.wslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/1374/Miscarriage%20Management%20Options%20patient%20info%20sheet_updated%20April%202019.pdf.aspx)

*It would have been helpful to have been provided with something like above document.*

*Lastly they do not comply with Section 5 PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF EARLY PREGNANCY LOSS which states "... Each woman's (and couple's, as appropriate) needs should be identified and acknowledged, assistance and referral given to facilitate the grieving process. The provision of information on miscarriage should be offered to each woman or couple."*

*Nothing related to psychological aspects was discussed during my EAPS appointment.*

*Following my attendance at the EPAS clinic I required D & C procedure and was still I was not offered any psychological support or referral for support by anyone at the Hospital.*

*I had further issues requiring me to return to emergency and have another procedure and still remained without any offer of support or referral for psychological support. I am now ok as I have a great GP and my own support network, but not all women are as fortunate as I am. I don't think you need to follow up anything my experience with the procedures, but it would be great if there is anything you can do to:*

- 1. get our LHD area website to actually have some information on it both for EPAS and other health topics*
- 2. get Bathurst Hospital to comply above mentioned sections of the Maternity - Management of Early Pregnancy Complications Policy Directive.*

Thank you again for the important work of the Committee and your preparedness to meet people in the regions.

 Cr Warren Aubin  
**BATHURST REGIONAL COUNCIL**