

The Hon. Greg Donnelly MLC  
Chair of the Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health  
Parliament House  
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SYDNEY NSW 2000  
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**Our ref Q21/550**

Dear Mr Donnelly,

**Inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales**

Thank you for the opportunity to appear as a witness at the Dubbo hearing on 19 May 2021.

I would like to clarify evidence provided by Mr Adrian Fahy, Executive Director, Quality Clinical Safety and Nursing on page 45 of the transcript when he was questioned by the Hon. Walt Secord MLC.

Four unexpected deaths in Western NSW Local Health District Hospitals have occurred without a doctor present. The evidence provided on the day indicated all four deaths were in the last 12 months. This is incorrect. The deaths occurred in the four years between 2017 and 2020.

The deaths occurred at Gulargambone Multipurpose Service in 2017, at Parkes Health Service in 2018, and Gulgong Multipurpose Service in 2020. In 2019, a patient at Peak Hill Multipurpose Service was transferred to a Sydney Hospital where they passed away two weeks later.

Virtual care is designed to support doctors, skilled nursing teams and other health professionals in regional communities who may not have a full range of specialist support available to ensure care for their patients, or where greater specialist clinical expertise is required in the management of patient care.

Investigations were undertaken for all four patients and the circumstances surrounding their deaths. The investigations concluded that virtual care was not a factor in the outcome for any of these patients, all of whom received medical care from attending health care professionals.

The information provided in this letter forms the response to the question taken on notice and can be published as a supplement to the evidence provided on the day.

Yours sincerely

Scott McLachlan  
**Chief Executive**  
18 June 2021