

The Hon. Dominic Perrottet  
Premier of New South Wales  
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By email: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/premier-of-nsw/contact-premier>

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The Hon. Brad Hazzard MP  
Minister for Health, Minister for Medical Research  
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### Open Letter to Premier and Health Minister

Dear Mr Perrottet and Mr Hazzard,

We are writing to you as the clinicians working in, and supporting the Yass District Hospital including the Emergency Department, in order to bring to your attention to the staffing crisis we are currently facing which, we believe, is placing the general community at great risk of harm.

Yass District Hospital has an ongoing, increasing and unsustainable staff shortage resulting in the hospital not having enough nursing staff to fill the base nursing roster required to operate the facility. There are also limited casual staff available to fill vacancies created by short term leave which means the current nursing workforce is required to cover the current roster deficits as well as any short-term sick leave. This is done either through additional hours, excessive overtime or requiring nurses on the shift to work short staffed.

Clinical staff at Yass Hospital have been escalating staffing concerns via the Local Health District but have received no appropriate solutions and we are now facing a looming crisis with the Omicron COVID-19 variant and the fast rising case numbers in NSW. We are facing this crisis with an already severely depleted workforce. Clinicians are already exhausted and burnt out and we are very concerned about how the Hospital will cope, and continue to operate safely, in the coming months.

The current staffing crisis at Yass Hospital means that clinical staff are unable to provide quality, and at times safe, patient care. Nursing staff have attempted to raise these concerns with local management through various meetings with no resolution.

Staff from Yass are very concerned about how this hospital will continue to be staffed. Over the Christmas period the Yass Hospital faced a situation where there was no registered nurse available on the night shifts of the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of December. During this time the hospital was staffed by locum Doctor an Enrolled Nurse and a Health and Security Assistant who were left to cover the hospital with no orientation to the facility or knowledge of where emergency equipment was located or how to use it. At no time were the Yass community notified of the staffing situation or potential for adverse health outcomes.

On the days that followed the hospital was staffed by a Paramedic as the senior clinician with no triage capacity or knowledge of the hospital who was brought in from Sydney and left to run the hospital with an Enrolled Nurse. This is unprecedented and left the community of Yass in a dangerous situation had they required emergency assistance during this time.

We call upon you to immediately address this staffing crisis and to confirm how the ED will be staffed over the coming months, to ensure that safe and appropriate care can be provided to the patients of Yass and also to ensure the health and safety of your current clinical workforce who are at breaking point.

Yours sincerely,  
Health care employees at Yass District Hospital  
Please contact in reply to this letter to:  
NSWNMA by email  
[gensec@nswnma.asn.au](mailto:gensec@nswnma.asn.au)

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