

Submission  
No 43

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

**Name:** Name suppressed  
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Partially  
Confidential

I would like to outline my recent experience having a baby and living in Lightning Ridge. I was well aware that I would have to travel the almost 4 hours to Dubbo for the birth of my baby (or an emergency flight if something went wrong), but I did not realise that after returning home with her, it would be so difficult to access any other medical assistance for her and myself postpartum.

It takes a week at a time to get in to see a GP, and even then it is a Locum, so impossible to build up a real history or rapport which adds stress to each visit having to explain the whole story every time and dealing with someone new each time not knowing the type of Doctor they are (pro or anti medication, compassionate and understanding or get-the-job done type, etc).

There is one regular Doctor here but he is apparently so busy that he is not taking on any new patients (I had never heard of this practice before). I have not been able to have my postpartum check with the gynaecologist because taking my extremely unsettled baby to Dubbo has just not been a practical option for me at this stage, and I think I have some postpartum medical complications, but getting help for me is just not an option at this stage. I have had to make 2 separate appointments to the GP in order to get a referral to see a paediatrician in Dubbo to help diagnose what is wrong with my baby, and even then, that was a month ago and I still haven't received an appointment date yet.

The stress and lack of sleep is taking a massive toll on my mental health. I have tried phoning Tresillian but was palmed off with "your baby is just overtired" which doesn't make sense for a baby who sleeps around 20 hours a day.

The CAFH nurses who travel up from Walgett are lovely, but limited in what they can provide and only come once a fortnight. The outreach midwives never even contacted me during my whole pregnancy, they claim it was because I was seeing the OBGYN in Dubbo - but that's because it took me 14 years to conceive this baby and I wasn't going to risk only seeing a GP in Lightning Ridge but was making sure I had the best care to monitor and make sure the baby was growing well..... I don't think that should have precluded me from the service.... and they could have at least called and explained that rather than leaving me hanging for months expecting a call.

As a first time Mum, being pregnant in Lightning Ridge was downright scary and being a Mum to a newborn in Lightning is harder than it should be. Not to mention the lack of services which were available to me living in rural NSW and having fertility issues.

My partner and I both work for Emergency Services and because of this experience, we will be moving out of rural NSW as soon as our jobs will allow us - something else to be considered.... rural NSW loses passionate and experienced emergency personnel due to the lack of health care.