

Submission
No 128

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 9 December 2020

Partially
Confidential

I have always lived in a small rural area and have only ever known the health services that are provided to us.

I would like to begin with the decrease of health services available locally at Wee Waa over the past few years. Currently we only have one Doctor attending our medical centre, for a 3.3/ 4 day week roster, since COVID 19 he is only physically here 4 days a fortnight – otherwise available via telehealth. This is extremely different to a few years ago when there were 2 – 3 doctors available at the same medical centre. It is my understand that it is Hunter New England Health that has the final say in regards to funding for additional doctors to be placed in our town.

With this being said, it must be noted that our local Doctor does not attend our local hospital and has not for some time. I do not know the fact behind this, but it makes it hard for our local hospital to provide the adequate care that is required.

This has had a major impact to everyone locally and those living in smaller isolated areas that once relied upon Wee Waa Hospital for basic and Emergency care.

I strongly believe this needs to be rectified quickly to ensure lives are not put at risk with the town not having a doctor available all the time, both at the medical centre and hospital.

I would like to make note that at times the Wee Waa Hospital does have locum doctors on site to cover the weekend period, this is usually only for emergencies and not for consultations. The response to this has been mixed within the community as they are a lot of the time not aware they are available and what care is being provided.

Over the past five years I have had 3 pregnancies, I am required to travel to Narrabri (40km) to see the nearest Obstetrician. During this time I was fortunate enough to have the Narrabri midwives provide antenatal clinics in Wee Waa every fortnight. This clinic has since been stopped due to staffing issues.

I would also have to travel to Moree (110 km one way) to see a professional sonographer for any Ultrasounds (this used to be available at the Narrabri Hospital, but was suddenly stopped by Hunter New England Health).

If at any time during a pregnancy you are deemed high risk Narrabri Hospital cannot accept you to care for and you are sent onto Tamworth or further.

I would like to make note of one particular incident that I experience in my last pregnancy in April 2019. I was 35 weeks pregnant, with a normal healthy pregnancy. I was unfortunate enough to catch the horrible gastro infection. Under my Obstetricians guidance I attended my local hospital in Wee Waa in aide of receiving anti-nausea medication as there was a locum Dr available.

I waited three hours before being seen by the doctor, who I was told by nursing staff was not attending to other patients at the time, was in his office. During the three hours of waiting my condition deteriorated which in effect placed myself in threatened pre term

labour. Once the doctor finally saw me, he presented extremely unprofessional and treated the nursing staff horribly. I was very upset with his presence. He not only belittled the nursing staff, but also belittled me while monitoring contractions. I was eventually transported to Narrabri hospital by ambulance where I saw my obstetrician . He was able to stop my pre term labour and sent me directly onto Tamworth Base Hospital via ambulance. I was admitted and stayed in Tamworth hospital for a week for close monitoring.

This experience left me far away from my family and put my pregnancy at risk. I strongly believe if I was seen earlier when I presented to Wee Waa hospital I would not have deteriorated to the extent that I did and I would not have gone into Preterm labour.

I believe that if Wee Waa had a full time doctor based in the town this would not have happened. I don't feel as though the locum doctor took the nursing staff seriously when I presented and his lack of time management was the cause of my deterioration.

was the locum doctor on that day.

This is just one of many personal experience that happen in our local community where the lack of health services are greatly impacting us.

I hope that the NSW Parliament take the time to have a thorough look into our rural health services and fill in the missing pieces to make it work much better – as is used to in the past.

Thank you.