

**Submission
No 186**

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

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Our Shire of Wentworth made up of 8,000+ people do not have a basic medical facility that is permanent. Most businesses are about making huge profits - what about just making a small profit but providing a wonderful medical facility that helps people in need. The Hippocratic Oath is one of the oldest binding documents in history. Written in antiquity, its principles are held sacred by doctors to this day: treat the sick to the best of one's ability, preserve patient privacy, teach the secrets of medicine to the next generation, and so on. So isn't it all about healing the sick, giving them an opportunity to lengthen their lives, be treated equally and to do the very best in caring for our fellow human beings?

We don't have and haven't had a medical centre (permanently) for well over 10 years. The trouble with giving your support to these medical practitioners is that when the medical centre closes, we do not have an alternative doctor or medical centre to go to. Mildura is full, they have many doctors but do not take new patients, so where the hell do we go? I found myself in that position and rang 10 doctors clinics with them all saying they are full!!

If you are lucky enough to get in to see a doctor it is at least a week before you can see the Doctor and if you are a working person the one or two days that you were sick are over and done with and you can't get a medical certificate to cover you prior to attending the doctor so the day or days come off your sick leave and if you don't have a medical certificate then you don't get paid. Totally unfair! We need and deserve a permanent medical centre - we all pay our Health Funds and all contribute via tax to Medicare so how about we get some permanent basic medical care.

Our elderly deserve a break - not all of them have a car, we have a bus service but only 2-3 trips a day into Mildura makes timing of appointments unrealistic and sometimes impossible. Once you arrive in Mildura getting to a doctor is spread over the city so the elderly need to rely on a family member, catch a taxi (expensive) or actually forego seeing a doctor as it is all too hard. We don't have an emergency centre in our local hospital so one has to travel 35kms to Mildura which can be life threatening for the time taken to travel this distance.

Our ambulance service is already very busy and therefore in an emergency there is the deliberation of whether to wait the long waiting time for the ambulance or drive the 35 kms to the emergency department in Mildura which is always busy with hours and hours of waiting. We have a high rate of people suffering from cancer, of all types, so a medical centre in our Wentworth township really needs to happen to get onto this insidious disease before it takes the lives of our local people.

In a town of 800 people I can name 25 people that have had breast cancer. These people have had to rely on daily trips to Mildura, and with breast cancer being a rampant killer time is precious and the need for sufferers to get medical care urgently is paramount. But they're having to wait weeks before they get into see a doctor, weeks or months to get to see a specialist and that is in Melbourne or Adelaide so in that time the cancer is having a wonderful time demoralising and deteriorating human bodies. Please please please can we get a medical centre, with oncology specialists, a dentist (none in Wentworth), a paediatrician, a triage nurse, etc. etc. Our lives are at risk every day that we do not have a permanent medical centre.