

**Submission
No 211**

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

Name: Mrs Joan Staggs
Date Received: 7 December 2020

Local Health Services Enquiry.

The purpose of this communication is to express my concern over the Gilgandra Multi-Purpose facility. Originally in January 2019 I passed on these concerns to the hospital board and to the local member of parliament. At the time I had a friend who was chronically ill, so I was visiting her on a daily basis - sadly things have not improved at all it seems.

- Decisions made on staffing (especially over the Christmas period) appear to reflect absolutely no concern for the health care of existing patients in the facility, no regard for the aged and vulnerable in the community and indifference to the fact that we are located at the intersection of three highways and are half way between Melbourne and Brisbane (so road accidents do occur).
- Community nurses are told to take 2-3 weeks leave over the Christmas New Year period which leaves a huge gap in the area as General Practitioner facilities are closed over the same period, leaving the community in a precarious position.
- Allied Health services like Physiotherapy and Radiology are either unavailable or extremely "stretched" to provide services
- It appears budgetary concerns of the nurse managers and general managers are of far greater concern than the appropriate care of patients.
- In 2019 when I visited the MPS there were occasions when there were only two staff on duty to care for the needs of the acute and emergency patients in the MPS. On the weekend (when there is no staff in the reception area) the door was locked on arrival as a security measure. Understandably, staff are concerned for their safety as they were busy attending to the wellbeing of patients and attending to emergency patients. Surely, increasing the numbers of staff on general ward duties as well as rostering in an efficient manner would reduce the unnecessary stress on our valued health professionals.
- Telehealth has a place in health care however, is no substitute for doctors, appropriately trained nurses and caring staff. Statistics point to the fact that we are extremely disadvantaged in rural so there needs to be an effort to improve the wellbeing of individuals in times of medical needs.