

Submission
No 300

**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 live in Cobar New South Wales and wish to draw your urgent attention to the poor quality of care offered by Cobar District Hospital and the Western NSW Local Health District.

Many Cobar residents share my anger and despair but will not speak up in case hospital staff 'take it out on them' if they ever try to get help.

Elderly people are being turned away from the hospital or discharged while they are still too unwell to nursing homes in Cobar and other towns such as Nyngan.

This is a disgrace and discrimination against the elderly. Cobar Hospital is known by locals as 'the hospital without patients'.

The only elderly person ever admitted for more than a couple of days is Cobar Mayor Lilliane Brady who goes into hospital frequently and often stays for weeks. This is disgraceful discrimination.

The Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, recently came on a 'secret' visit to Cobar to 'give land back to indigenous people' and paid a 'secret' visit to the hospital to see the Mayor. The Premier avoided the rest of the community because she did not want to hear our concerns about the poor health care here. She has turned her back on us.

These are some of my recent patient experiences with Cobar Hospital.

*In 2018 my husband's bowel burst and went gangrene. He suffered in Cobar for three days before being flown to Dubbo Hospital, then RPA in Sydney. He returned six weeks later with a stoma bag.

After we returned to Cobar his stoma bag burst five times in one day, so I took him to the hospital and was told to go home and sort it out myself as Cobar Hospital nurses were not trained in the procedure. We had to Drive to Dubbo twice in two weeks (four hours each way) to learn how to deal with this. It is a 600-kilometre round trip. At the time there were numerous people in Cobar with stoma bags doing the same thing. When asked about this by a SMH journalist in May 2020, the hospital said all it's nurses are trained to change stoma bags! If that is really the case why were we all turned away?

*Recently my sister-in-law who is 79 with aggressive dementia, presented by ambulance at Cobar Hospital after bleeding on her bathroom floor. It turned out to be nothing serious, but she was discharged at 3am. This is shocking treatment of an elderly person.

*Earlier this year, two men, one aged 43 and one in his early 70's both went to Cobar Hospital with chest pains but were turned away and given Panadol. The 43-year-old man, died that night in his home.

The man in his 70's drove himself to hospital again the next night and died from heart failure a few hours later. That is two deaths of people turned away in the same week.

These are just some of the problems with Cobar Hospital. Most locals are too scared to speak up.

I fear of growing old in my hometown because of the lack of health care here.

Dubbo Base Hospital is not much better, because staff discharge country patients too soon and don't want to treat the elderly.

We don't live in a third world country and alarm bells should be ringing loud in Parliament.