

Submission
No 307

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 13 December 2020

Partially
Confidential

I have recently resigned my position as an enrolled nurse from a small rural hospital in northern NSW after over 40 years of nursing there.

I found I could no longer continue to work in an environment that I had considered to have become unsafe.

Our staffing levels had been cut to a bare minimum and our hospital has been staffed with locum doctors which have been becoming more difficult to obtain.

Often we had been working with only 2 staff on duty being 1xRN and 1xEN on a shift without any backup and being the only 2 staff members in the entire building and caring for up to 12 acute care pts as well as dealing with a busy ED.

Over the past 18 months there has been a huge turnover of staff with up to 12 resignations being handed in due mainly to the stress of being unable to deal with the responsibility of being on the front line of any trauma or critical incident (of which there have been many) likely to present to our ED and also for the lives of our pts on the ward and on occasions not having a doctor on site.

We have been campaigning for over a year to have these issues addressed with community rallies and forums and meetings and as well as a delegation meeting with the minister of health Brad Hazzard with little to no change.

The situation has deteriorated to the point that it is extremely difficult to recruit new staff as nurses are reluctant to work in these conditions and we rely heavily on agency staff who often leave without fulfilling their contracts as do the occasional locum Dr.

These issues in our small country towns need addressing urgently as people are not getting the care they deserve and are dying because of a lack of on site doctors and we are losing highly skilled and dedicated nurses in droves.