

**Submission  
No 355**

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

**Name:** Dr Robert Lodge  
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# **DR ROBERT S LODGE**

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## **To Whom It May Concern:**

**Re: Health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural,  
regional and remote New South Wales,**

### **Parliament of New South Wales**

I am writing to make a submission to your enquiry from the perspective of a Consultant Physician working in a regional NSW. I have been practising for 43 years with roughly 50% of that time in tertiary teaching hospitals in Melbourne and Oxford, UK. Then, for past 19 years, my practice as a Consultant Physician has been based in Bangalow, Northern Rivers.

Whilst there are several aspects of regional medical practice to consider, I wish specifically to draw your attention to the failure/inadequacy of community-based programmes for patients with chronic disease. I practice mainly as a Consultant Physician/Neurologist and have a particular interest in neurodegenerative diseases e.g. Parkinson's disease and MND (motor neurone disease).

Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) appears to have a singular interest in acute management of patients i.e. those requiring admission to hospital and often barely pays lip service to chronic conditions such as the above. This disadvantages patients and families; leads to poor quality medical care and poor outcomes; and, eventually, an increase in health costs as many of these patients eventually require "unnecessary and avoidable" admission to acute hospitals. These admissions potentially could have been prevented, by better care in the community.

I am fully aware of the difficult interface between federally and state-funded medical services. During the course of my 43 yrs in Medicine, this interface has become more difficult and financially more wasteful. I would be very happy to elaborate on the above, should you wish further detail or further examples.

I believe much of what has been mentioned above in regard to chronic neurological conditions is as true of management of many other chronic medical in regional and rural areas.

Yours sincerely,

**Dr. R. S. Lodge**  
M.B.B.S., F.R.A.C.P.

*I am a Consultant Physician in Internal Medicine. I obtained MB, BS at Monash University in 1977 and Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (FRACP) in 1985, after completion of post-graduate training in Oxford UK (1983-1986). Prior to 2002, when I moved to Bangalow in NSW, I had been based in Melbourne, VIC. My professional appointments included Senior Physician, Department of Internal Medicine, St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne; Director of Stroke Unit, St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne; Physician to Coronary Care Unit, St Georges Hospital, Melbourne; and, I practised as Intensive Care Unit Physician at St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne and St Vincent's Private Hospital, Melbourne. I had teaching and examining roles at the University of Melbourne and the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and was an Honorary Senior Fellow, Faculty of Medicine, University of Melbourne. Currently, I hold appointment as Senior Lecturer, School of Medicine, Griffith University, QLD.*