

Submission
No 369

**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 have a number of stories I could share about the health care in Cobar, some great and some not great at all. The story I'll share today relates to an event involving my eldest daughter, . In September of 2017 she was not well, she had a cough, slight trouble with breathing and a fever. Took her to the local medical center and they prescribed her antibiotics and told us to continue paracetamol and nurofen.

After 2 days of no improvement we took her to the Cobar hospital, the Locum Doctor looked over and came to the same conclusion as the medical center doctor and told us to continue with our current treatment regime.

After slight protest from my wife and I he ordered a chest x-ray. The Locum Doctor looked at the chest x-ray and said it showed nothing of concern and sent us home. condition worsened that night and we decided to ring the Pediatrics Department at the Dubbo Hospital, after explaining to them the symptoms and how long it has been going for they told us to head straight in. So 10pm that night we packed bags and hit the road for the 3hr drive to Dubbo.

Upon arrival they assessed and determined she was quite ill, I mentioned that a chest x-ray was performed in Cobar so the Dubbo doctor viewed the exact same x-ray and instantly pointed to it and said you could clearly see she had Pneumonia on the x-ray.

was admitted and placed on a drip and ended up staying 4 nights in Dubbo hospital's paediatrics ward.

I rang Cobar hospital and spoke to the Director of Nursing and expressed my anger at how all this has happened and she explained her disapproval of the Locum Doctor and stated he would not be returning to Cobar Hospital.

I'll take this opportunity to share another story involving my second daughter, was born on the 11th of May 2019 and early in June she became quite sick. She started to fever and had laboured breathing. As a newborn of 4 weeks old, we were very concerned. Not being able to get an appointment at the local medical center we presented to Cobar Hospital.

The Locum Doctor told us to continue panadol and nurofen and she would get better in a few days. As she got worse and worse we again took her back to Cobar Hospital only to be refused to be seen to by the doctor. On 2 occasions the Locum doctor said she would not be coming to see us and we were sent home and told to see the local GP after the weekend.

I would like to point out that the nurses during this time did all they could, and seemed quite upset themselves that a Dr would refuse to come and see a newborn baby with reported difficulty breathing, after all, in a town the size of Cobar, the distance the Dr would have had to go to be able to be able to assess her would be all of a few hundred metres!

Watching my 4 week old daughter clearly struggling to breath and being told the doctor couldn't be bothered to see us and to go home we extremely shocking to us. Due to our previous experience with we decided to use parent intuition and drive the 3hrs straight to Dubbo and present to Dubbo hospital ED. We were immediately treated with respect and taken straight to the Pediatrics ward to see the doctor.

I want to share at this point my wife was extremely distressed and started to have an anxiety attack as she was worried we would again be turned away and that our baby would not get the care she needed. thankfully the Dubbo staff realized our situation and completely calmed the situation and told us we had done the right thing and were where we needed to be.

The Dubbo Pediatrician recognized that breathing was clearly laboured and was struggling and after some test discovered she had RSV. They cleared her nasal passages for her and we were given some care instructions on how to treat her and manage her symptoms. After 13 days of her being unwell she started to make a very speedy recovery in the 24hrs following our Dubbo visit.

My wife submitted feedback and I have included a copy of that in the attachments including the response we received to that feedback.

Despite the negative experiences (and there have been many), there have also been wonderful times that we have received the most amazing care at both Cobar and Dubbo hospitals. I am just truly passionate that these negative experiences should not be happening. We were lucky in that we have the means to get in the car and go to Dubbo when we feel things are not right, but many people do not have that resource and that is a worry.

What would happen to all those little babies that can't get seen to? All the elderly that can't get in the car and drive in the middle of the night? I know we live rurally and we accept that our access to resources are limited, but that doesn't mean our access to high quality care should be too.

Please if any further information is required please feel free to contact me by phone or email.