

**Submission  
No 378**

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

**Name:** Mrs Cheryl McDonnell

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On Thursday 29th October 2020, I took my husband, Trevor McDonnell to Forbes hospital Accident and Emergency. Trevor is 72 years old with COPD and a history of having had an abscess on his neck between his gland and his windpipe that nearly cost him his life in October 2019; The surgeon who saved his life and did a remarkable job caring for him was Natalie Rainger.

On the 29th October this year he noticed a lump in the same position on his neck in the afternoon. By 6pm the lump had doubled in sized. We knew his life was once again in danger and went straight to Forbes Hospital. the nurse who we saw met us at the door with an angry attitude and stated. 'why didn't you call an ambulance.' She immediately administered ventolin to my husband with a spacer and took his basic observations.

I tried to tell her that we were there because of the abscess in his neck that was growing and infected. The nurse responded by saying. 'How would you know it is infected.' She did not attempt to look at the abscess on his neck. The nurse then took us into another room and told us to wait there. some half an hour or more later she entered the room and demanded my husband take more ventolin when we tried to speak to her again she grabbed the ventolin and spacer and loaded more ventolin in it and left the room.

Another half hour or so the nurse entered the room again and said my husband looked better and could go home. I told her he needed to see a doctor. Quite some time passed before a doctor came into the room and introduced himself and stated 'You have three minutes.' I told him about the abscess and that it was life threatening and needed attention. I attempted to give him the history that an abscess in the same place almost killed my husband last year.

The doctor looked at the abscess and said. Nothing we can do about that here. You need to see your gp for referrals and scans. There is nothing we can do here.' My husband and I left the hospital. It was after 9pm and dangerous for me to drive him to orange at night when I was tired. My husband said he would rather go to orange in the morning after a nights sleep. When my husband awoke the abscess had doubled in size again.

I drove my husband to Orange Hospital on Friday the 30th October 2020 and he presented at accident and emergency there and that afternoon surgery was performed on him and he was sent to ICU where he stayed until Sunday 1st November 2020. He is presently in the medical ward of Orange Hospital awaiting more tests. I am very hurt, upset and spent a couple of very scary days that were made worse by the staff of Forbes Hospital.

There are things the doctor and nurses could have done. They could have contacted Orange Hospital to confirm what we had told them about an abscess almost killing him last year. They could have sought advice. They could have kept him in overnight and organised transport for him by ambulance.

It takes me an hour and a half to drive to Orange from Forbes. I was terrified all the way that his wind pipe could collapse along the way and there would be nothing I could do to help him, except call an ambulance and wait. We were concerned that if we called an ambulance to our home it would have taken him to Forbes Hospital and more time would be lost. Time which he may not have had.

Orange Hospital staff have all been wonderful. They are kind, considerate, and ensure my husband who is hard of hearing has heard what they say and understands.

Please do something about the staff at Forbes Hospital.