

Submission
No 425

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

Name: Mrs Margaret Thomson

Date Received: 10 January 2021

As a resident of the Wentworth Area I wish to make a submission to the inquiry.

I have been an active member of my community all my life and have witnessed the slow decline in Health Services particularly the last 20 years.

I was a Shire Councillor for 13 years (including 7 as Mayor). The township of Wentworth is pretty much the centre (in terms of location) of the Shire. Whilst the population is small it services a huge area for residents and the many tourists alike stretching as far as SA border and half way to Broken Hill. The current proposal to build a Health Centre in Buronga will be of very limited value to Wentworth because of available transport, in fact it is only 2k's from Mildura.

1. My main concern is the lack of a full time Medical & Allied Health practice for the town. There is currently a Doctor provided 2 days a week by Dareton Aboriginal Health (funded by Government and the Shire). Whilst we are grateful to get 2 days this is not enough especially as appointments with Aboriginals are given preference.
2. The Community raised the funds to build what is now a 60 bed Aged Care facility. This facility is very dependent on local medical services which are currently very limited.
3. For 40 years the local Ambulance Service was provided by unpaid volunteer drivers. When the community managed to raise \$250,000 to build an Ambulance Station, the Dep. finally runs a great fulltime service with professional drivers. The call on this service is growing all the time, especially as the Emergency Dep. at the Local Hospital is now closed.
4. I am currently a board member of Wentworth District Community Medical Centre. We have ascertained that the town would benefit greatly by having community owned fully fitted out medical clinic ready to be sublet to a Doctors practice. The provision of such a facility makes it more attractive for prospective Doctors. In fact because of Government disinterest we appear to have lost the Doctor & his staff that were interested.

Please acknowledge that our town is a supportive can do community that appreciates all the help it can get.