

Submission
No 480

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

Organisation: Leura Home Garden Club

Date Received: 14 January 2021



LEURA HOME GARDEN CLUB

**The Honourable Greg Donnelly MLC,
Chair,
Inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in
rural, regional and remote New South Wales,
New South Wales Legislative Council,
Parliament House,
Macquarie Street,
Sydney,
NSW 2000.**

14th January 2021.

Dear Sir,

This submission is made on behalf of the Leura Home Garden Club which comprises membership from Faulconbridge to Blackheath and thus represents a voice from the upper Blue Mountains in rural/remote NSW. Our membership is mostly retired and over 70 years in age, with some in their 80s and even 90s. This population is increasing.

For this population demographic, ready access to a hospital which provides comprehensive preventative, curative and palliative services is essential to ensuring acceptable health outcomes for the community.

The Blue Mountains District ANZAC Memorial Hospital in Katoomba, despite the best interests and total commitment of staff, does not meet this need. The hospital is underfunded and could not function without the fundraising efforts of various community organisations such as the Hospital Auxiliary and the annual Leura Garden Festival. This hospital has not been included in the program of significant infrastructure upgrades which have been made to other hospitals in recent years.

Whilst Nepean Hospital has been developed and substantially expanded in recent years this hospital is located too far away to provide health care in an emergency. For those people fortunate enough to still be driving a motor vehicle the trip takes more than one hour. For those people dependent on public transport the train trip feels interminable and there is still the distance from Penrith Railway Station to Nepean Hospital to navigate in some way. In an emergency, patients who cannot be treated at the Blue Mountains Hospital are transferred to Nepean Hospital by ambulance. This delay in access to urgent treatment may be catastrophic.

Identified health service shortcomings in our locality are:

- 1) Adequate intensive care facilities,

- 2) Adequate laboratory services (blood transfusion is not possible at the Blue Mountains District Hospital),
- 3) A total lack of oncology and other cancer care services,
- 4) An existing palliative care service which is of high quality but is insufficient to meet the demand,
- 5) Adequate cardiovascular services with cardiologists on site,
- 6) Adequate radiography services for diagnostic purposes such as MRI, CAT scan,
- 7) An extremely limited outpatient service with numerous specialties unrepresented,
- 8) A small operating theatre which offers limited surgical procedures only,
- 9) A limited physiotherapy service,
- 10) Provision for isolation treatment during a future pandemic.

In summary, in the upper Blue Mountains we require access to a major hospital fit for 2021, and not a cottage hospital locked in the past.