

**Submission  
No 483**

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

**Name:** Mr Hal Ginges and Mrs Heather Ginges

**Date Received:** 18 January 2021

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Secretariat

Parliament of NSW

By Email: [portfoliocommittee2@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:portfoliocommittee2@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

**Attn: Madeleine Foley**

Dear Ms Foley,

**Re: Blue Mountains District ANZAC Memorial Hospital**

We are writing in regard to the enquiry which, we understand, is presently underway in respect of the services to be provided by NSW Health through the Blue Mountains District ANZAC Memorial Hospital, known to us locally as Katoomba Hospital. We have been residents of the upper Blue Mountains for over 40 years. We live in Katoomba and have daughters in Katoomba and Wentworth Falls and grandchildren born at Katoomba Hospital. We have attended the hospital on very many occasions both as patients to Accident & Emergency and as visitors to family and friends. For some time I, Hal Ginges, was the duty solicitor for Magistrate's hearings in the Mental Health Unit of the hospital.

Our community is very dependent upon the current range of services offered through Katoomba Hospital. Our experience in general has been that the service provided by the hospital is excellent. We are fearful that the current review into the hospital will recommend a reduction in those services on the basis that Nepean Hospital in Penrith is a large teaching hospital and that there are also now services in the new Lithgow Hospital. It will be known to the Committee, of course, that there is only one reliable form of access from Katoomba to Penrith and Lithgow through the Great Western Highway and that this is an area which is prone to annual bushfire threats as well as occasional flooding. If, for example, there were a reduction in the maternity or high dependency services currently provided by the hospital, our community could be in serious trouble.

We should also like to impress the committee the significant benefits in retaining regional community-based hospital services. Although there are what appear to be economic advantages in centralising services in large bases such as Penrith, there are nevertheless substantial social and economic benefits in retaining decentralised hospitals. Decentralised hospitals will attract medical practitioners, including specialists and nurses to communities outside of the regional hubs and cities, and assist in that way in building healthier and stronger local communities. We should also add that, regrettably, our family has had some bad experiences of transfers from Katoomba Hospital to Nepean Hospital. One family member was placed in a bed next to a person who had just lost a limb from a golden staphylococcal infection, and another was left in Accident and Emergency for hours with dirt around an exposed wound following a fall from a horse. In our view it would be very much in the interests of our local community if services from Katoomba could be enhanced rather than in any way diminished.

Kindly contact us if you would like us to provide any further information.