

Submission
No 494

**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 recently relocated to Gunnedah NSW from the Illawarra region. In the Illawarra, we were spoilt for choice with medical centres and both private and public hospitals to meet our needs. We also had access to specialist and cancer clinics. Here in Gunnedah, there are limited medical options - 2 medical centres who have closed their books to new patients and an empty relatively new medical centre!

We can travel to Boggabri (35 minutes away) or Tamworth (60 minutes away) to see a GP and Newcastle for specialists. I recently tore my bicep muscle and rotator cuff but it took 3 GP's to get it diagnosed. Because most GP's are on secondment or on temporary contracts, you don't have that Dr / Patient relationship & they don't know your medical history or pain threshold. Suffice to say it took 5 weeks to find out what I'd done then four weeks to see a specialist then another trip a week later to Newcastle to undergo surgery.

My recovery is expected to take 12 months and involves fortnightly physio in Tamworth and follow ups in Newcastle with the surgeon! Great expense and many many many kilometres in travel not to mention unpaid leave for me and unpaid time off for my partner as he is a casual employee with no sick leave, carers leave or annual leave - another genius government decision to have a mostly casual based workforce !!!!

Our access to the care I need in Gunnedah is ZERO. The medical centres cannot cope with the number of people who live here - booming at the moment with the mining industry and set to grow with mining expansion - and the hospital looks like something out of a Country Practice!! It is old, a rabbit warren of a building and so run down it's embarrassing. I am told there is a \$3m upgrade proposed but when and if that happens remain to be seen.

My in-laws (now deceased) lived in Gunnedah for 60 years and when they were ill in their later years, we used to bring them to the Illawarra for check ups and tests and treatment as it wasn't available to them here!!! They too had to drive to Tamworth to see specialists - both had heart problems and my mother in law severe diabetes. Often they had to wait 3 months to see a specialist !!

So to answer the question do regional areas have access to the same medical services as our city counterparts IT IS A LOUD AND ANGRY NO FROM ME !!!

Please do something about it rather than spend thousands on an inquiry and make hollow promises!