

**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

This submission is an addition to my earlier submission in December 2020. It references my experience in Coolah NSW [population 900] within the Western NSW Local Health District & approximately 150kms from our nearest regional city of Dubbo.

At that time, we had one GP remaining in the town. This GP made the sudden announcement in early January that she would be closing her clinic permanently on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Despite tens of millions of dollars being spent in this small town, numerous appeals & warnings to government health departments & Ministers [both federal & state & on one occasion I wrote to the Shadow Health Minister, Walt Secord], Coolah does not have one single GP left to utilise the three GP clinics now in this town.

It is reported that the rural population experiences poorer health outcomes & lower life expectancy than their city counterparts. This could be attributed to lack of access to medical care, late diagnosis of disease, long waiting lists in the public health system and poor follow up of existing conditions.

This has now been my experience which resulted in my 61-year-old husband finally being diagnosed with a life-threatening heart condition this week after seeking attention at medical centres in Dubbo & Coonabarabran and a presentation at Dubbo Base Hospital & Coonabarabran Hospital emergency throughout last year. This week we have travelled 500kms on Monday, another 200kms on Tuesday & Wednesday when we were lucky to secure a specialist Cardiologist appointment in Coonabarabran through the efforts of a GP there who attended to my husband when he presented early on Boxing Day morning. We went back to Dubbo yesterday [over 300 km round trip] & we're facing months of medical treatment which we pray will result in a return to a better quality of life. None of this would have been possible if we did not have private health insurance. The cost of private health insurance is prohibitive and has become a luxury many Australians simply cannot afford.

While I don't know what the answer is, I do know that health is funded well. The problem is that layers of health bureaucracy gobble up millions in poorly planned health initiatives & funding agencies which deliver little to grass roots health care.