

Submission
No 545

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 14 January 2021

Partially
Confidential

In early November 2019 our father presented to a doctor in Coonabarabran and was diagnosed with a 'pulled muscle on the inside of his rib'. He died of lung cancer on the 16th December 2019.

Those six weeks were very difficult for him, travelling to Dubbo and Sydney for diagnosis and beginning treatment. They did not need to be as hard as they were.

The travel, ongoing advocacy required to get basic scans and treatment, sorting out how to get to Dubbo and Sydney and where to stay, manage pain, manage the severe shock of finding out it was a bit more than a pulled muscle...!

The main thing I want the inquiry to know is that rural people are not getting the same level of treatment as city people due to the fact specialist appointments are already filled and scans and treatment are not available locally - and it is not OK and we look forward to your efforts to improve it.

The worst bit, for the record, for me, grieving every day since and crying as I type, doing all I knew to try to help at the time because we could luckily afford to take time off work and travel and help because we've lived and worked in Sydney and know how to get to and from the hospitals ... the worst bit was the absolute MEANNESS of the policy or the staff member or the process who instead of booking the requested flights from Dubbo to Sydney on the QantasLink Dash 8 (ground powered air conditioning, wider steps easier to get up, wider aisle) - flight times that met with people being able to coordinate travel of 1.5 hours to Dubbo and then transfers in Sydney - no, that request was ignored and he was booked on the Rex Saab and left to sit in a waiting room in pain for additional time at a Sydney hospital on less sleep and more missed meals. It was nothing for the person who dismissed the request and booked the Rex flight, but it severely impacted my Dad. There was no fare saving, I checked. He died within days and the proposed treatment plan he travelled for was never implemented.

Thank you for working to improve the system - this is a very important opportunity.