

**Submission  
No 586**

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

**Name:** Dr Geoffrey Pritchard

**Date Received:** 15 January 2021

---

I am a retired specialist surgeon living at Tumut NSW (Emeritus Mayor of Tumut Shire Council and presently a Councillor of Snowy Valleys Council.)

Tumut was a sub-regional medical centre for Tumut/Gundagai/Tumbarumba with several local GPs with anaesthetic or obstetric skills and me as a VMO resident surgeon (plus some VMO backup from Wagga.). These skills meant that urgent diagnoses, intermediate surgery, resuscitation etc were readily available - mostly at no cost to the patient.

Now Tumut is getting a new hospital but is only slated to undertake "Day Surgery". This means that there would not be enough work to attract procedural GPs, let alone a surgeon, to the area and keep their skills up.

Snowy Valleys is not a growth area according to the bureau of statistics but we have many heavy industries such as Snowy Hydro, Visy, timber, tourism - all expanding and also the covid problem is increasing settlement here - ask the estate agents The first question that "tree changers" ask is what are the health services like?

Medical practice has changed in recent years and it is hard to get emergency converge at the hospital and locums are too expensive.

We seem to have enough GPs overall. One GP suggested to me that the area health service employs two procedural GPs at the hospital to cover ED, do regular rounds.

There are plenty of Australian trained doctors overseas who, if offered residency conditional on specific regional service for a period would come.