

**Submission
No 594**

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

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Date Received: 15 January 2021

I live in Gunnedah, in rural NSW, and while Gunnedah is not a major rural city, it is a considerable sized town. When I moved here in 2002 there were two GP practices with a total of around 10 doctors servicing a population of 12000 and while the population hasn't grown much we now only have 4 doctors to service that same number.

I am one of the lucky ones, my doctor is still here and even though I usually have to wait 2-3 weeks for an appointment I can still get one. I have many friends, some in their late 70s and 80s, whose doctor is no longer in the town ,and as the remaining doctors have closed their books, these elderly people are forced to travel to Tamworth (80 kms) away to see a doctor.

This is not good enough as quite often these people have no way of getting there.

We need more doctors urgently before more lives are lost or more doctors leave due to overwork.

Gunnedah is supposed to be getting a new or upgraded hospital, but what use is that if there are no doctors to "man" it??

None what so ever.

While I understand Gunnedah is not the only town in this situation, something needs to be done. If anything the fact that I can write that Gunnedah isn't the only town in this situation, tells me and should tell the government, that this is a systemic problem in rural NSW and needs addressing urgently.

The saying "we have nothing if we don't have our health" is 100% accurate and, we in rural NSW , do not have our health at present and the situation is getting more dire by the day.