

**Submission  
No 600**

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

**Name:** Mrs Leonie Hutchinson

**Date Received:** 15 January 2021

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After living on the northern beaches of Sydney for more than 40 yrs my husband and I chose Coolah NSW to semi retire as it had Community plus Aged Care, Ambulance, a Hospital and an excellent doctor service.

We purchased here ten years ago and also started a small part time business which we still operate in the town. A couple of years ago our Aged Care facility was closed and the patients moved to the refurbished hospital, then one of our doctors closed and moved out of town and the privately owned medical centre was closed.

Now we have no doctor in the hospital or privately operated - none in our town, the closest doctor is Coonabarabran or Mudgee, an hours drive away, while we are till able to drive at this stage not knowing for how long. The State Government decided on engaging Rural Medical Services to look after our town and other small towns in NSW.

Obviously this was a poor decision and after spending huge amounts of funds refurbishing areas of Rural Hospitals including ours, after a short time this poor decision came to the fruition of the company going broke, making all doctors and staff redundant. Other small towns around us are all in the same devastating situation and doctors in nearby areas are overloaded to the point where they are closing their books.

When is our State Government going to act fast to rectify the mess they have created as Telehealth is NOT the answer, people are just having to travel further and further afield to try and find a "FACE to FACE" doctor and a huge number are just not able to drive large distances anymore.

Address this matter now as it is already out of control.