

**Submission  
No 606**

**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:** 14 January 2021

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As an ex-journalist, and now an aged pensioner, I have long been concerned about the dwindling of medical services in regional areas, and have often been in contact with various MPs regarding many issues.

It seems that cutting costs is behind most issues.

Country doctors and nurses and medical staff are wonderful, dedicated people who give their lives in service to their fellow human.

But it seems to me we fail these wonderful people with constant cost cutting to the detriment of services.

Services centralised to save cost, yes, that is sometimes sensible for specialist services, but to deny country centres something as basic as a doctor at their local hospital is taking those cost cuts too far.

A virtual doctor on a computer is helpful in certain instances where the outcome is not life threatening, but nothing replaces a human doctor when someone's life is at stake, as was the woman who recently died because of this at Gulgong.

I have long lists of the failures of the medical systems in regional areas, but you know enough to realise we have a drastic problem.

I believe the problem behind those lists is the cost cutting system of rewarding health CEOs for saving dollars instead of saving lives.

As I said in the beginning, I have nothing but praise for the medical people who work their butts off trying to push through a cost cutting system that does not support their efforts.

Our local councillor got it right when he said in the Mudgee Guardian recently that Administration staff get a pat on the back (in the way of high wages; bonuses etc.) for every cut they make that saves the health system money, when in fact, they should only get a pat on the back for saving more and more lives and providing quality basic medical services for all peoples in all regions of Australia.

Money spent on the real issue - saving people's lives- is money well spent. It is no use the Minister for Health telling us how much money is given for this and that if the money does not support a system that saves lives. Otherwise the money given to health becomes meaningless and the Minister for Health becomes meaningless and our health system becomes meaningless. And the people of Australia become meaningless. They live and they die without medical help.

There is no use spending money on a health package if the package has nothing in it. i.e. the package is empty; the package is not doing its job; the package is doing something else, like paying most of that money in wages to CEOs with great ideas to save money.

If money is given for health, it needs to be spent on saving lives, and this means basic medical services treating all Australians, in all areas, both regional and in cities.

Give us back real doctors, real hospitals, real medical services and support those wonderful medical people who work so hard - or just give up trying to run the country, because health wise, it is failing.