

**Submission
No 612**

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

Name: Ms Susan Lenehan and Mr Richard Mills

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14th January 2021

Submission to the Portfolio Committee No 2 Health

Committee Chair
Hon Greg Donnelly

Dear Sir

For many years there has been much discussion about the need for a replacement Hospital for the Blue Mountains War Memorial Hospital at Katoomba.

The present Hospital, built in 1926 and added to in a maze of added-on buildings over the years, is now in critical need of replacement and extension for the following reasons.

Re Terms of Reference 3(C) and 4(d)

1. The present Hospital does not provide the critical services required for a population of 80,000 residents (between Springwood and Lithgow), which is both growing and ageing. A recent survey revealed that 76% of Public patients presenting to Katoomba Hospital had to be transferred to the Nepean Hospital for treatment. This entails a trip of 1 to 2 hours, often in heavy traffic.

Every person one speaks to has either had to travel to Nepean or has a friend/relative who has had the same experience.

So residents in the Blue Mountains and beyond are experiencing barriers to access and much needed quality services.

2. Term of Reference 6(f)

From my time in the Mountains (over thirteen years) there have been no major capital works at the Hospital and from the state of some of the buildings this has obviously been the case for even longer.

Every time it rains a number of the buildings leak and there is constant upkeep and maintenance required.

Parking is also totally inadequate.

3. Term of Reference (9 (i))

The nearest Oncology treatment centre is on the Nepean Campus.

We are personally experiencing this situation as we transport a friend with terminal cancer to the Cancer Clinic for Chemotherapy treatment.

We also know of other friends who are in the same situation.

4. Term of Reference 10(j)

The Hospital has recently managed to acquire a small number (2-4) of Palliative Care beds, which for this ageing community is totally inadequate.

In summary:

Having canvassed the views of residents and health professionals there is overwhelming support for a new, public, fit for purpose, Teaching Hospital in the Blue Mountains.

As stated previously, there has been much discussion over the years about the inadequacy and lack of health and hospital services in the Blue Mountains, and a number of proposals re the siting and facilities needed for a new Hospital have been canvassed.

It is now critical and urgent that money be allocated for the planning and siting of a teaching Hospital in the coming Budget.

Yours sincerely

Susan Lenehan and Richard Mills