

**Submission  
No 615**

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

**Name:** Mrs Kathleen Parnaby

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My name is Kathy Parnaby and I am a senior member of the Condobolin community. I am an active and contributing associate to the town's society, both past and present involved in many organisations and groups. I was also a business owner for 50 years and raised my four children in the township of Condobolin. Writing this letter, I represent ALL members of the town especially the elderly and the sick.

Condobolin is a rural community providing services for many, also providing services to remotely located individuals and families. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, those of rural and remote geographical locations are recognised as "at risk" and "disadvantaged" priority population groups. Other Australian priority population groups include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, the Elderly and those of low socio-economic status, all of which are present within our community.

Priority population groups are achieving significantly poorer health outcomes compared to the rest of Australia, the health statistics in which are matching those in developing worlds. This is a result of limited access to health care facilities and services. Our hospital is no longer a hospital, only a medical centre. Although, we have practising doctors in the community, there is not a readily available practitioner at the hospital all the time especially after 8pm, weekends and holiday periods, only one who splits time between a busy booked out medical centre and the retirement village.

Throughout my life time in Condobolin our town members have rallied for our health services whether it be doctors, facilities or care. To improve the lives of many we need permanent and full-time doctors present within our local hospital.

Often, people choose to travel out-of-town further risking the health of themselves or family members, due to the lack of care and having no available doctors at the hospital in the events of emergencies. There are many community sources that can identify many cases in which life-threatening issues have almost been fatal as a result of no doctor or the need to travel.

We are not all so privileged to have support from friends or families. Often, individuals are transported via ambulance, left waiting large amounts of time and then left to find their own transport home, without seeing a doctor. Another event in which I am privy to is a case of brain and spine injury in which was not addressed, after multiple admissions patients were either taken by family to another town or transported to a larger service to be attended to (scans, treatment etc).

People of Condobolin are delaying the need for serious medical attention as we are all well aware of the no doctor situation and the lengthy waiting periods apparent at our local hospital in which impact not only those in need but also burden and worry it places on family, friends and fellow community members.

A reliable and permanent doctor at our local hospital will improve lives of the people in Condobolin and surrounding areas.

From the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 2020 to the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 2021 there was zero doctors in our town. We have the right to access these vital services. Who is responsible for those who suffer and are denied general care?

The solution is simple, straight forward and identified multiple times throughout this letter, doctors, permanent doctors in our hospital.

Forty-years ago, we had a plenty of doctors, a maternity wing, an operating theatre, fracture clinic and now you can't even get stitches.

"We are not in a third world county although, out here it feels like we are"

I am writing this on behalf of many, particularly those who are not tech savvy, have no help and themselves aren't able to voice their opinions, needs or concerns. Our town has lots to offer although, our hospital service is not one to recommended. Each year we see many township members who have spent their entire lives in this community, sadden as they have to move away to gain access to better health services. Many who, are forced by the system and their worrying families to become isolated in a place they do not know in order to have access to live saving facilities they we cannot offer. I am not only speaking about those who are elderly or sick but those who are young, fit and healthy.

I know that even though we have rallied before, the ongoing cycle of this major issue causes people to shake their heads and give up. I have done my best to create awareness about this opportunity to have our voices heard although, the repetitive nightmare stops many from having their say. This is not the first letter to be written but as time goes on, the last one is mostly likely near. Throughout the process of writing this even our local hospital board members have said not to bother.

There are sometimes fly in, fly out doctors although, COVID-19 of course effects this. We need a live-in doctor, someone here all the time. We are not getting help; this is not good enough or a solution, simply a band aid. We do not have a hospital; we have a medical centre. Yes, we have doctors at our medical centres in which appointments are often up to four weeks wait. We are not an operating hospital anymore and are risking the lives of those need emergency help and care.

In the time of a pandemic, this virus would wipe us all out. Our services aren't enough normally let alone during a world-wide crisis. I hope whoever is reading this is listening. You're asking for solutions, I have given you all the solutions, the one solution! How do we do this? How do we get the vital service we need in the bush? I do not know, but I am asking you for your assistance in making a greater change for our town of Condobolin and the many small communities within the Lachlan Shire that surrounds and relies on it.