

**Submission
No 646**

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

Name: Mr Brian Beaumont

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Thank you for accepting and considering my submission on health services within the township of Wentworth, Far West NSW. Wentworth with a population of around 1600 is an ageing and low socio-economic community with public transport being limited to a bus with a restrictive timetable and travel route. This one public travel option is not suitable for the aged and frail without alternative transport options. Wentworth in addition to its own population services the needs of many rural and pastoral residents to the north.

The provision of health services and health outcomes for residents of Wentworth and surrounds has been less than acceptable for many years. The NSW Governments own health statistics confirm the much higher than average trend in potentially avoidable deaths and hospitalisations. Trends which would not be accepted within metropolitan areas of NSW.

At this point in time the only health and Doctor services available to Wentworth residents (and visitors to the area) is a part time and limited service provided by Coomealla Health Aboriginal Corporation (CHAC). This organisation has a primary responsibility to the health and welfare of indigenous people and whilst it offers a range of services, Doctors are limited to 2 and a half days per week and Pathology 3 sessions of 3 hours.

By way of example CHAC's opening hours over the Christmas / New Year period seen them providing Doctor access for a total period of 3 hours over a 19 day period. This is at a time when we have a global pandemic and a significant numbers of travelers and visitors to the region.

Wentworth sits within the responsibility of Far West Health (Broken Hill). My view is that Wentworth is largely forgotten and overlooked, for whatever reason. Residents of Wentworth predominantly address health concerns by seeking medical attention in Mildura Victoria. This is not always achievable with patient lists often being full and appointments being difficult to obtain.

Our hospital which is aged and apparently been on a replacement list for some decades has no emergency facility and does not accept walk up admissions or presentations for assistance. Clients are predominantly referred to ambulatory transport to Victoria at great expense to the NSW Health budget.

One could suggest the people of Wentworth and surrounds are enduring third world health services and infrastructure at a time when health and Doctor access would appear paramount. Health infrastructure and health outcomes will not improve without a genuine and sustained focus by NSW Health on this matter. Residents of Wentworth and surrounds deserve better than the existing almost nonexistent health services and largely nonfunctional hospital.