

Submission
No 682

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

Name: Mr Geoffrey Langford
Date Received: 28 November 2020

Partially
Confidential

28 November, 2020.

Chair,
Legislative Council Portfolio Committee 2 – Health,
NSW Parliament,
6 Macquarie Street,
SYDNEY, NSW, 2000.

Dear sir,

INTRODUCTION.

I write in relation to Medical Services at Cobar and Western NSW Local Health District.

In particular, I address the following matters:

1. BLOOD TRANSFUSION; Absence of blood transfusions at Cobar Hospital.
2. 000 CALL CENTRE; Inadequacy of 000 response at Cobar rural areas.
3. TRANSFER OUT OF COBAR; No choice in transfer from Cobar to Dubbo Hospital.
4. CARDIO-VASCULAR CLINIC; Absence of Cobar Clinic since 31/12/2019.

PREFACE.

I declare that I am a resident of Cobar Shire and have lived most of my life at Cobar. My first occupation is a Grazier and I reside on a Family Farm

profession is Solicitor

years and am single. I wish to continue to live here for the rest of my life.

Cobar is an isolated country town and district situated 300 km from Dubbo, 131 km from Nyngan, 160 km from Bourke and 255 km from Hillston. 4 working mines operate in the district and it is on the cross roads of east-west Barrier Highway and north-south Kidman Way, both busy roads with varied traffic from private vehicles, caravans, campervans, trucks, heavy vehicle traffic, stock and fodder transport and military transport.

My

I am aged 73

1. BLOOD TRANSFUSION.

MY EXPERIENCE.

At about 9.15 am on 25 September, 2019, while in Cobar, I suffered bleeding from my penis. 000 emergency call was made from [redacted] Cobar and Cobar ambulance arrived promptly and took me to Cobar Hospital and at about 9.45 am I was admitted to ICU. Cobar Hospital Staff promptly treated me in my distress and I cannot but praise my treatment at their capable and efficient hands and in their care. My concern is that no blood is stored at Cobar Hospital. I was, and am still horrified to learn, while in ICU at Cobar, that blood has to come from Dubbo 300 km away and is transported by NSW Police Highway Patrol. I had lost a lot of blood and my BP was 70/50. The excellent doctor and nurses at Cobar worked on me to get my top BP to 95 so that I could be transported by helicopter to Orange where I was treated.

Blood transfusion was available at Cobar in the past. I recall that many years ago my late Father, who died in 1984, was called to Cobar Hospital to a night emergency and donated blood to a local woman in childbirth. I am aware that my cousin and his wife gave blood after a terrible mine accident that claimed 3 lives.

My issue was raised in Parliament by Hon. Roy Butler, MP, Member for Barwon, by question to the Minister for Health on 14 November, 2019 and the Minister replied on 17 December, 2019. For the assistance of your committee I enclose copies of my letter dated 7 November, 2019 to my local member, his response of 8 January, 2020 and the Minister's undated letter received by me 24 January, 2020.

Since then I was interviewed [redacted] by [redacted]
WNSWLHD [redacted] My support person [redacted]
[redacted] showed them photographs taken of the blood stains. I enclose
copy their response handed to me that day.

MY SUBMISSION.

The Minister's and WNSWLHD's responses are an insult to me and to residents of Cobar. They demonstrate that they will not consider returning to Cobar blood transfusion availability on demand. I believe that the Minister and his NSW Health bureaucrats fail in their duty to provide this basic service to Cobar. I call for urgent return of urgent blood availability at Cobar. Excuses are not good enough. Immediate action is needed.

2. 000 CALL CENTRE.

MY EXPERIENCE.

At about 8.30 pm on 8 October, 2019 while I was alone at my home I suffered another bleed. I rang 000 emergency and I was in some distress. I had difficulty giving to the 000 receptionist my home address, and described the directions Hillston Road (now known as Kidman Way) south of Cobar and on the western or right side of the road.. At about 8.45 pm I rang a friend in Cobar who arrived about 9.00 pm. She rang 000 and repeated directions and went to the front gate about 500 metres from the house and the ambulance arrived about 9.45 pm. Cobar ambulance promptly took me to Cobar Hospital and in the early hours of the morning I was flown to Orange Hospital for operations. I returned home 25 October, 2019.

The ambulance response was too slow, taking over 1 hour on a well known rural road.

I believe that inadequate rural addressing at Cobar contributed to the delay. For the assistance of the Committee, I enclose copy of my letter to NSW Ambulance dated 30 November, 2019.

MY SUBMISSION.

000 Call Centre should be situated in rural NSW and operators should be properly trained in response to rural addresses.

3. TRANSFER OUT OF COBAR.

MY EXPERIENCE.

In 2016 I was transferred from Cobar Hospital to Dubbo Hospital for heart tests at the request on a Cobar doctor. I preferred to consult my cardiologist in Sydney but on the local doctor's advice I went to Dubbo. After 2 days without treatment at Dubbo, I insisted in being discharged from Dubbo Hospital and I took myself to Sydney, was promptly treated and returned home. Dubbo Hospital has a bad reputation in Cobar. In my Advanced Health Care Directive I have stated that I do not want to be in Dubbo Hospital. I am pleased that Cobar Hospital has not transferred me to Dubbo and sent me to Orange where my NOK resides.

MY SUBMISSION.

WNSWLHD should respect patient's wishes and choice of hospital if treatment cannot be performed locally.

4. **CARDIO-VASCULAR CLINIC.**

MY EXPERIENCE.

After my heart operation on 9th May, 2009 I had the benefit of Cobar District Hospital's Cardio-Vascular Clinic 9.00am to 10.00am Monday and Friday each week. The Clinic was conducted at the Hospital's gymnasium on Hospital premises by a Registered Nurse and up to 10 patients were users of this excellent Clinic. My experience is that I received great benefit from my regular attendances and I continue to praise the service. Because the regular attending RN left Cobar at the end of 2019 there has been no Clinic at Cobar as the position has not been filled.

MY SUBMISSION.

Cobar's new " hospital " contains a new and newly fitted out gymnasium intended to be used for Cardio-Vascular Clinic. Resumption of Cobar's Cardio-Vascular at Cobar's new Cobar Health Service should be a priority.

Yours faithfully.

Geoffrey Langford.