

**Submission  
No 71**

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE No. 2  
RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL HEALTH  
REFORM AND GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION WITH REMOTE, RURAL AND  
REGIONAL COMMUNITIES**

**Name:** Mr Christopher Pearson

**Date Received:** 1 November 2024

Since I lodged a submission (no.214) in 2020, and appeared at the hearing in Wellington 2021, Gulgong's medical situation has deteriorated significantly.

Our local medical practice has closed due to the unfortunate serious illness of our sole GP.

Nearby Mudgee practices have closed their books to new patients, with existing patients waiting up to 4 weeks for an appointment.

These practices do not bulk bill and charge over \$100 per consultation.

Gulgong residents have been forced to travel 100s of kilometres for such simple things as medicals for drivers' licences.

Gulgong is none the less growing rapidly with 2 large housing estates under way, and 1000s of extra workers tied to our REZ projects.

Discussions with local ambulance staff reveal that people are "becoming sicker" as they hold off 'til the last moment before calling an ambulance after not being able to see a GP or a VMO face to face at our MPS.

There has been much discussion from sitting politicians, with some good measures put in place (such as increased bulk billing incentives) but these measures do not solve the immediate crisis.

We fear no-one will want to take over the local practice as the costs associated are huge.

The high costs rents, real estate values, indemnity insurance, wages, specialist equipment etc etc are prohibitive.

A sole practitioner in a small town faces many challenges without peer support.

Could I suggest trying to attract doctors to a public based system whereby a practitioner can use an existing government facility (MPS?) which already has some of the equipment required.

Perhaps existing nursing staff could be seconded in some way as support staff.

This will take great political goodwill between State and Federal governments but it could alleviate some of the stresses towns like ours are facing at the moment.

With thanks,

Chris Pearson