

s22

From: Admin | Border Medical Group <admin@bordermedical.com.au>
Sent: Friday, 13 October 2023 6:09 PM
To: Minister Butler
Subject: Albury Wodonga Health
Attachments: Letter to the Prime Minister of Australia- Oct 23[63].pdf

REMINDER: Think before you click! This email originated from outside our organisation. Only click links or open attachments if you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Minister,

Please find attached a copy of the letter from the Border Medical Association to the Prime Minister of Australia concerning the redevelopment of this major regional health service.

Yours sincerely,

s47F

Secretary, Border Medical Association

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE



Border Medical Association

13th October 2023

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP

Prime Minister

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

The Border Medical Association has previously written to you seeking your support to help resolve the impasse that surrounds the nation's only cross border health service- Albury Wodonga Health (AWH). In our previous correspondence we sought federal support for a new greenfield single site hospital for AWH.

As you are aware, the AWH Clinical Services Plan (CSP), which was conducted with the NSW and Victorian Health Departments in 2021, called for a single site hospital based on safety and efficiency concerns leading to poor patient outcomes. This, in effect, required a new hospital given the parlous state of the AWH infrastructure. The Master-planning process, including the Value Management Studies, indicated that the safest and most cost-effective way forward was to build on a greenfield site because of the complexities and inefficiencies of a protracted multi-staged redevelopment. Unfortunately, the Masterplan was lost in intransigence and subterfuge by both health departments, with revisions in 2022 behind closed doors, to water down the capacity of the proposed hospital.

Whilst pleasing to see the two states commit to a new single site hospital in October 2022, it was clearly apparent that there were significant compromises based on the sum committed, with no commitment to subsequent phases. This became more apparent as clinicians were informed that the projected care points were to be revised again, and a new masterplan drafted. It beggars belief that this was to be done after a funding announcement, and following two years of robust planning. Clinicians from various specialties, whilst excluded from planning thus far, have now been informed that several departments will see either a reduction in capacity or at best the status quo being projected. Clinical areas that do see an increase in the points of care, only see sufficient growth to cater for the present activity levels.

There are further legitimate fears based on the commentary from the departments and the Victorian Health Minister that there are now compromises to the promised single site hospital, with hospital-based services, including operating theatres, still to be on both sides of the river. The brownfield

new single site hospital is being hosed down, and it is clear there is no support for further contributions to the subsequent stages. Even if there were further funding to this redevelopment, the compromises forced upon this first stage are now threatening the long-term potential of a brownfield development of a single site hospital. It is certainly compromised due to the significant reduction in the points of care projections, with growth that only covers our deficits and does not facilitate the decanting of clinical areas to facilitate subsequent phases. We have been further informed that the co-location of partnered services is no longer feasible, which would have enabled significant growth in services achieved through economies of scale and partnerships.

It is not too late to correct the course of this redevelopment. We desperately need intervention by the Federal Government. Federal support has frequently been seen in other hospital developments. We re-iterate that there are strategic advantages to the Federal government becoming involved including in the development of not only a regional and rural health workforce, but defence health personnel. It would further support the development of Albury Wodonga, which has long been seen as a critical region given its strong business, industry, and transport development.

We are determined to continue to advocate for a community that continues to be short-changed by all levels of government. The current proposal will not see the current health care crisis on the border abate, and risks entrenching the status quo. We are pleading for the opportunity to press the case for the sake of our community, and need your support to work with the states to deliver what the planning demonstrated was really required.

Yours sincerely,

s47F



Chair, BMA

Cc

Hon Jacinta Allan
Hon Chris Minns
Hon Mark Butler
Hon Richard Marles
Hon Helen Haines
Hon Sussan Ley
Hon Anne Ruston
Hon Andrew Hastie

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

s22

From: s47F
Sent: Monday, 27 November 2023 2:44 PM
To: Minister Butler
Subject: Albury Wodonga Health Network
Attachments: Federal Minister for Health.docx

REMINDER: Think before you click! This email originated from outside our organisation. Only click links or open attachments if you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Minister

I have attached a letter detailing a recent experience with the Albury Wodonga Health Care network.

As the letter explains I have written to both State Health Ministers but thought that it may be of interest to you and your Department as well.

Regards

s47F

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

Federal Health Minister,
The Honourable Mark Butler MP

Dear Mr Butler

I am writing to you regarding a health emergency suffered by s47F and the service that he received at the Albury Base Hospital.

Why is this of interest to you I hear you ask.

As the Health Minister for our Federal Government, I am not sure if there is anything that you can do as I suspect it is the responsibility of the individual State Governments, regarding Hospital funding. But as the Federal Minister I feel that it is important that you know of the deficiencies within the Health Networks within Australia. This letter is written to explain our recent experience and highlights the deficiencies of the Albury Wodonga Health system due to underfunding and poor planning practice.

Below, I have included an excerpt of the two letters s47F , my s47F and I have sent to Albury Wodonga Health, detailing the medical emergency that was the catalyst for me to write letters to both State Health Ministers, and then yourself.

Excerpts from first letter:

s47F



THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

s47F

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

s47F

A large rectangular area of the document is redacted with a solid grey fill.

Excerpts from Second letter:

s47F

A large rectangular area of the document is redacted with a solid grey fill. The text "THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE" is printed diagonally across the redacted area.

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

s47F

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

s47F

Living in an area that is not within easy access of a capital city in Australia, should not be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of anyone in this country. All regions need to have the appropriate facilities and the staffing, to maintain their health services at a level that we should expect in Australia. It appears that a vast amount of money is spent on projects that are very short term, just to get attention at the next election, but no party has the intestinal fortitude to spend money and fully fund projects that cost many Thousands if not Millions of Dollars, but would be of benefit to the whole community over a long period of time.

We have looked at the Albury Wodonga Health Service Plan and note that the current presentations at AWH Emergency Departments were 71,312 for year 2019. The projected increase for the AWH for the next 20 years is predicted to grow up to 150,000 presentations, this is a doubling of presentations potentially. The logical conclusion one would think would be to increase the size of the AWH Emergency Departments by a similar size, yet this is not the case. This implies that the current situation is only going to get worse unless someone takes this current situation and future needs seriously. As the Albury Wodonga area is one of the fastest growing areas in the country these figures would be the minimum in reality.

We need a hospital that will cater for the future needs of our area. To expand the current AWH facilities or to build a new single Hospital site. The growth of the Albury – Wodonga area must be taken into account, otherwise more and more dangerous situations will arise and lives lost.

s47F

I have sent the above in a letter to the relative State Health Ministers. I hope that this will encourage them get together to produce a workable plan with proper funding for the future of health care in Albury Wodonga, instead of building for now, which as I have tried to outline will not work and endanger more people in our region.

I am not sure what if anything there is that you can do but, as they say tell a Politician, who knows what will come of it. I know that the easy answer is, 'it is not your area of responsibility, it is a State responsibility', but if there is anything you can do please do it, as next time I, or someone else, may not be so lucky.

Thank you for your time reading this somewhat lengthy letter.

Yours sincerely

s47F

27 November 2023

s47F

From: Admin | Border Medical Group <admin@bordermedical.com.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 5 December 2023 9:35 AM
To: Minister Butler
Subject: Re: Albury Wodonga Health [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: Response to Minister Park - Final letterhead.pdf

Dear Staff,

Thank you very much for letting me know. The document is now attached!

Yours sincerely,

s47F

Secretary, Border Medical Association

From: Minister Butler <Minister.Butler@Health.gov.au>
Date: Monday, 4 December 2023 at 5:24 pm
To: Admin | Border Medical Group <admin@bordermedical.com.au>
Subject: RE: Albury Wodonga Health [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Good afternoon,

Please be advised there was no attachment to your email. We look forward to receiving your correspondence.

Office of the Hon Mark Butler MP
 Minister for Health and Aged Care
 T: 02 6277 7220
 E: Minister.Butler@health.gov.au
 PO Box 6022
 Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

The Department of Health acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to elders both past and present.

From: Admin | Border Medical Group <admin@bordermedical.com.au>
Sent: Sunday, 3 December 2023 10:43 PM
To: Minister Butler <Minister.Butler@Health.gov.au>
Subject: Albury Wodonga Health

REMINDER: Think before you click! This email originated from outside our organisation. Only click links or open attachments if you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Minister,

Please find attached a letter from the Border Medical Association to the Minister for Health NSW concerning the redevelopment of Albury Wodonga Health.

Yours sincerely,

s47F

Secretary, Border Medical Association

"Important: This transmission is intended only for the use of the addressee and may contain confidential or legally privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient, you are notified that any use or dissemination of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you receive this transmission in error please notify the author immediately and delete all copies of this transmission."

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE



Border Medical Association

30 November 2023

The Hon. Ryan Park MP
Minister for Health
52 Martin Place
Sydney 2000

Dear Minister,

I write with disappointment at your response to our meeting and subsequent correspondence (Ref: M23/4928).

In both your written correspondence and from your responses at budget estimates it remains clear that you are either dismissive of our valid concerns or continue to be misled by the very same health officials who have created this situation.

This is not just an argument about brownfield versus greenfield, as you suggested at the NSW budget estimates. This is an escalating concern from clinicians and our community that despite being the largest regional health service between Sydney and Melbourne, Albury Wodonga Health (AWH) has again been neglected by the NSW and Victorian governments and their respective health departments. There is increasing alarm at the dismissive approach being taken towards the need for a new single site hospital for our region. The case was clear- we need a single site hospital, and the current infrastructure is not fit for purpose. This was concluded after thorough service planning and masterplanning that the departments denied occurring, despite being at the table with AWH all the way through. Now we are left with funding that only provides for what we need now and compromises the growth in capability and capacity needed for our community. Even if the brownfield were the best option, what has been committed sees it fail before it begins.

The documents uncovered by s47F, that highlight the role of members of the NSW Health department in compromising a meaningful outcome for our community, is disgraceful, and needs to be called to account. The burying and obfuscation surrounding the 2021 Masterplan, the brief submitted from the then Director of Service and Capital Planning

Unit of NSW Health to the NSW Treasurer, the correspondence between NSW Health and AWH, the capital investment proposals: all point to a dismissive and neglectful approach from your department. The brownfield was not chosen because of a thorough process or due deliberation- it was at the whim of a department that could not care less, and swallowed by governments that just want to get away with the bare minimum and have a glossy photo shoot in hard hats and high vis.

We are the last of the regional centres to receive a significant infrastructure investment. Where other services have completed their builds, we have been left to flounder and find ourselves in a crisis. Ongoing staging when we are in this situation will only continue to see us limp on. When we needed a major circuit breaker to prevent ongoing harm, we received a grossly inadequate contribution from each state. Compare the contribution from NSW to that of the Tweed Hospital. In effect NSW contributed the same as it has for Griffith Base Hospital- in a city one fifth of our size. Compare the contribution from Victoria to Bendigo or Ballarat hospitals- our nearest comparator. We have been left so far behind other regions, and our community continues to be regarded with contempt. Our community is treated in parlous conditions. Our community continues to have to seek basic services in other regional centres (smaller than ours) and metropolitan centres- despite being one of the further regional centres from Melbourne or Sydney. It is pitiful and embarrassing.

The principles outlined in intergovernmental agreement (IGA) that underpins AWH states clearly

- i. That both states recognises that AWH is a major regional centre
- ii. That the entity AWH is empowered to determine the most appropriate and effective manner to deliver the services to meet the needs of the community, and
- iii. That NSW and Victoria will work together to minimise the barriers to effective and efficient delivery of an integrated health service.

Section 13 of the IGA outlines the responsibilities of each state with respect to infrastructure development. This includes ensuring

- i. AWH has the appropriate infrastructure to cater for our region
- ii. that decisions are consistent with the service plan and Master plan and promote an integrated approach,
- iii. that processes and decisions relating to infrastructure are made clear and transparent.

None of this has transpired. The decisions being made fly in the face of a clinical service plan and a thorough masterplan that were overseen by both states. The decisions have not been clear or transparent, with the NSW Health department clearly complicit in this whole saga. It makes a mockery of the overarching principles of the IGA. It makes a mockery of any attempt to address the needs of our community. Your concerns at limited further funding continue the dismissive approach to our community- there is funding for many other projects that are politically appetizing, but not for a large regional community that suffers significant health inequity, purely because it straddles a river and a state border.

The consequences of the neglect shown by both states in this process and funding commitment are becoming more apparent:

- That there has been a massive reduction in the projected points of care planned for AWH. The reduction is a naked attempt to cut the coat according to the cloth- shifting the goal posts to suit the funding. It is embarrassing that the health departments think this is justifiable after a funding announcement, particularly as they were heavily involved in the service planning conducted in 2021. Whilst your department may continue to make claims that the Clinical Services Plan could not be validated, there is clear evidence of NSW Health being involved in the process and we are aware there was further validation of the projections by the Victorian Health Building Authority. Again, NSW Health had visibility of this. The reductions in the service plan do not recognise our current deficits, and with the limitations of funding, it sees us only planning for now:
 - The ICU now being built is smaller than what was even planned in 2018 and 2021 and is only the same capacity as we have now.
 - A growth of three theatres only covers for the transition of maternity to Albury and does not allow sufficient growth in surgical capacity
 - The bedstock provided barely covers our overflow units and current deficits. This is even before we consider the bedstock needed with new service delivery and even before we consider the severely limited elective surgery conducted at AWH (our elective surgery waitlists, with our category three wait list larger than the Alfred hospital in Melbourne)
 - The cardiac catheter lab, built in 2018 with federal funding, will be replaced with smaller capacity than we have now. This alone makes a mockery of the assertion that we needed a brownfield to maximise recent infrastructure investment!
- We are now being forced back from a single site hospital. The limited funding means that we will now require theatres and other services to remain in Wodonga. There is concerning language emanating from both State's Ministerial offices, as well as the new concept of an entity plan for the Wodonga Hospital, despite this being covered off in the 2021 Clinical Services Plan and Masterplan.
- The minimal growth does nothing to facilitate the decanting of wards that are not fit for purpose.

- It remains clear that even if there were a commitment to a new single site hospital, the staging will continue to be protracted and further compromised as we have to continue to lobby for ongoing funding. Our service will limp on.
- The consultation you mention as part of planning is dismissive and tokenistic, particularly when it is now acknowledged that we will not see a single site hospital, nor will this investment do any more than what we need right now. The feedback we have received from clinicians is highly critical of the functional briefing project user groups, that have been siloed, and repeatedly ignored the feedback of staff.

What is now required is clear. We need to return to the Clinical Services Plan Points of care projections, and we need a commitment to fund to those projections. When recognising the scale of the effort required to firstly collocate the services required and the amount of staging required, then it becomes much more obvious that the multiple stages of a brownfield will be inefficient, costly, and unnecessarily complex, when a similar quantum of funding can deliver a greenfield.

We call upon you to reconvene with the Victorian and Federal governments and commit to the above. We also call upon you to attend the planned health summit in Albury Wodonga, proposed for early 2024.

Yours sincerely,

s47F

Chair, Border Medical Association

Cc The Hon. Anthony Albanese, MP Prime Minister of Australia

Cc The Hon. Chris Minns MP, Premier of NSW

Cc The Hon. Jacinta Allan MP, Premier of Victoria

Cc The Hon. Mary Ann Thomas MP, Minister for Health Victoria

Cc The Hon. Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health Australia

Cc Dr Helen Haines MP

Cc The Hon. Sussan Ley MP

Cc Justin Clancy MP

Cc Bill Tilley MP

Cc s47F

Cc s47F, Better Border Health

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

s22

From: s47F (M. Butler, MP) s47F @aph.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 14 March 2024 4:50 PM
To: Minister Butler
Subject: FW: Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital - AlburyCity Council
Attachments: Hon Mark Butler MP - Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital.pdf

REMINDER: Think before you click! This email originated from outside our organisation. Only click links or open attachments if you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

FYI,

s47F
Electorate Officer

Mark Butler MP | Minister for Health and Aged Care
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR HINDMARSH

f MarkButlerMP
@markbutlerMP
markbutler.net.au

Adelaide: (08) 8241 0190 | Canberra: (02) 6277 7220 | mark.butler.mp@aph.gov.au
21 Commerical Road, Port Adelaide SA 5015

We acknowledge the Kaurna people, their Elders past, present and emerging, on whose lands we meet and work.

From: s47F @alburycity.nsw.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, March 14, 2024 4:09 PM
To: Butler, Mark (MP) <Mark.Butler.MP@aph.gov.au>
Subject: Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital - AlburyCity Council

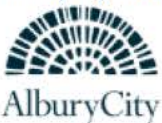
Good afternoon Minister Butler

Please find attached correspondence from AlburyCity Council.

Kind regards
s47F

s47F
Executive Assistant

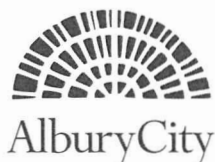
553 Kiewa Street
Albury NSW 2640
T s47F
alburycity.nsw.gov.au



AlburyCity acknowledges the Wiradjuri people as the traditional custodians of the land in which we live and work and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, culture, tradition and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that contribute to our community.



THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE



Contact: Frank Zaknich
Reference: DOC24/62844

Hon Mark Butler MP
Minister for Health and Aged Care
Parliament House
PO Box 6022
CANBERRA ACT 2600

12 March 2024

Dear Minister Butler,

ALBURY WODONGA REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Council welcomes the release of the Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital Project – 2023 Masterplan Report, which we have been advocating for since the project was announced.

We acknowledge the significant investment being made by the NSW and Victorian Governments in this critical regional initiative and look forward to continuing to engage with you as the Federal Minister for Health, in supporting its progression.

The Albury Wodonga Health Service is the only cross border health service in the country. The cross border nature of this service means it faces a range of unique challenges which differ from any other health service in the nation. The service must be enabled to meet the future needs of our nationally significant regional city and surrounding regional communities.

In October 2022, the Premiers of the day announced 'a new world-class hospital for Albury-Wodonga' and that the \$558M would fund Stages 1 to 3 of the project 'bringing all services together at a state-of-the-art site' and '..improving services and making it easier for locals to get the care they need in one location'. The stages announced were to provide a Clinical Services building (including an intensive care unit, maternity services and paediatric services), a helipad with direct access to the ICU and emergency department, neonatal care and new operating theatres for more surgery, as well as a new 32 mental health bed to replace the Nolan House Mental Health Unit, the expansion of outpatient and specialist spaces for treatments such as dialysis, and a new multi-level carpark.

AlburyCity has consistently advocated for the progression of the project, the establishment of a single site hospital, as evidenced by previous correspondence.

T 02 6023 8111
 F 02 6023 8190
 info@alburycity.nsw.gov.au
 alburycity.nsw.gov.au

PO Box 323
 553 Kiewa Street
 Albury NSW 2640
 ABN 92 965 474 349

The Masterplan Report released on the 28 February 2024 highlights the work to be undertaken with current funding, however we note Albury Wodonga Health's concerns as to whether this will deliver on the commitment to the first three stages of the announced development. It appears that scaling back proposed works to fit within the \$558M budget (estimated in 2022) will not deliver the outcomes required by Albury Wodonga Health for our community and health care providers.

Albury Wodonga needs a single site hospital to meet the needs of its growing community now and into the future. The Masterplan demonstrates that a single site hospital can be accommodated on the Albury site to build upon the recent and historic investment made in our regional health infrastructure. However, it would appear from the Masterplan that significant further investment will be required to make this a reality.

At the Council meeting held on Monday 11 March 2024, Council resolved:

That Council calls on the NSW, Victorian and Australian Governments, including National Cabinet, to work together to expedite the realisation of the Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital Masterplan, to ensure this single site hospital meets the current and future needs of the nation's only cross border health service, by:

- a) *allocating any additional funding required in upcoming budgets to fully complete the Stages of the project as previously announced;*
- b) *developing an agreed implementation plan, including timelines for all future stages of the Masterplan;*
- c) *allocating funding for all future stages of the Masterplan in forward budget estimates;*
- d) *commencing detailed design and planning for future stages as soon as construction works commence on previously announced Stages; and*
- e) *keeping the community and key stakeholders informed of progress in the development of the single site hospital.*

Council requests your strong, sustained support and advocacy for this once in a lifetime investment commitment in health infrastructure for the growing Albury Wodonga region and would appreciate a meeting with you in Parliament House Canberra or Albury in the near future to discuss this most important issue.

Please don't hesitate to contact us for further information on 0260238755 or email frank.zaknich@alburycity.nsw.gov.au.

Regards

s47F

Cr Kylie King
MAYOR

s47F

Frank Zaknich
CEO

T 02 6023 8111
F 02 6023 8190
info@alburycity.nsw.gov.au
alburycity.nsw.gov.au

PO Box 323
553 Kiewa Street
Albury NSW 2640
ABN 92 965 474 349

s22

From: s47F [redacted]@helenhainesmp.org>
Sent: Thursday, 4 April 2024 2:02 PM
To: Minister Butler
Subject: Albury Wodonga Health (Case Ref: HH443310)
Attachments: 240404 - Letter to Health Minister - AWH - Helen Haines MP.pdf

REMINDER: Think before you click! This email originated from outside our organisation. Only click links or open attachments if you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Minister,

Please see attached letter from Helen Haines MP, Independent Federal Member for Indi.

We look forward to your response.

Best wishes,

s47F [redacted]

s47F [redacted]
Chief of Staff

Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

M s47F [redacted]

E s47F [redacted]@aph.gov.au



THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

Helen Haines MP



The Hon Mark Butler MP
Minister for Health and Aged Care
House of Representatives
PO Box 6022
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

Mark,

Re: Albury Wodonga Health

I write to you regarding the situation regarding Albury Wodonga Health and the planned redevelopment of the Albury hospital site.

Albury Wodonga Health serves a catchment of 300,000 people across the Victorian-NSW border, includes two hospitals and is administered and funded through an Inter-Governmental Agreement between the NSW and Victorian Governments. Through this agreement, the Victorian Department of Health is the responsible agency for the health service.

As you know, for a number of years Albury Wodonga Health has undertaken a process to prepare for the redevelopment of its current infrastructure, including through a Clinical Services Plan in 2021 and subsequent masterplan.

In October 2022, the then premiers of Victoria and NSW announced each government would spend \$225 million, as well as \$108 million already invested by the NSW and Federal Governments (\$558 million in total) to upgrade the Albury hospital site. At the time, they said this would "bring all services together at a state-of-the-art site".

Unfortunately, since then it has become increasingly clear that the funding announced on that day will not meet that goal. In fact on December 19 last year, Albury Wodonga Health Chief Executive Bill Appleby and Board Chair Jonathan Green wrote to the NSW and Victorian Health Ministers "this investment will not deliver the Government's policy intent of a single-site hospital".

They went on to say: "We now find ourselves in the position of having to consider further value management elements to bring scope in line with the available budget threshold envelope, further eroding the delivery of the publicly stated policy intent."

I have enclosed the full letter, with makes for concerning reading.

I fear that despite Albury Wodonga Health being the biggest, busiest health service between Melbourne and Sydney, our status as a border community means we are not receiving the appropriate investment in our health needs.

On March 1, the Albury Wodonga Regional Health Summit was hosted by Wodonga Council and attended by representatives from the NSW Government, the Commonwealth Government, the Victorian Opposition, local representatives at federal, state and council levels from both NSW and Victoria.

I thank Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care Ged Kearney for attending the Summit, representing the Federal Government and listening to my community.

Dr Helen Haines MP

117 Murphy Street -
Wangaratta VIC 3677
T 03 5721 7077
E helen.haines.mp@aph.gov.au
W helenhaines.org

@helenhainesindl

The Summit made a series of resolutions or asks, some of which are relevant to the Federal Government. These are:

1. That federal and state governments provide integration of pathways into a health profession and a Rural and Regional Collaborative Health Research Centre of Excellence to provide a vibrant future of collaboration and learning and create a location of aspiration for the health fraternity;
2. That the State and Federal Governments provide seed funding for the establishment of a collaborative education and research centre for rural and regional health including operational resources and physical facilities.
3. That the Victorian Government collaborate as a trusted partner with the Federal and New South Wales Government in a bipartisan approach and with the Albury Wodonga Region Community.

I have enclosed the full list of resolutions for your information.

I have also written to the Prime Minister, and requested that he discuss the situation with his Victorian and NSW counterparts at the next National Cabinet meeting.

I also request that you raise this issue with your Victorian and NSW counterparts at the next National Council of Health Ministers.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and discuss my concerns and those of my community regarding Albury Wodonga Health.

Yours faithfully

s47F



Dr Helen Haines MP
Independent Federal Member for Indi

April 4 2024

Ref: HH443310/SW

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE



[Cii] 1

ALBURY & WODONGA
 Phone: (02) 6058 4444
 Fax: (02) 6058 4528 (Albury)
 Fax: (02) 6051 7477 (Wodonga)

19th December 2023

Ref: OUT23-0217

The Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas MP
 Minister for Health
 Level 22, 50 Lonsdale Street
 Melbourne VIC 3000
BY EMAIL: minister.health@health.vic.gov.au

Office of the Hon Ryan Park MP
 Minister for Health
 52 Martin Place
 SYDNEY NSW 2000
BY EMAIL: MOH-EMS@health.nsw.gov.au

Dear Minister Thomas and Minister Park,

The joint announcement by NSW Premier Hon. Dominic Perrottet MP and Victorian Premier Hon. Daniel Andrews MP on 27 October 2022 for a first tranche (what was then understood to be stages 1-3) of infrastructure investment of \$558 million for Albury Wodonga Health, was welcomed by the Board and Executive, clinicians and the broader community. The announcement confirmed the investment would be on the Albury campus which would be the single site solution - *improving services and making it easier for locals to get the care they need in one location and bringing all services together as a state-of-the-art site.*

Your subsequent joint visit on 6 September this year reinforced the commitment to a co-located health destination and significantly expanded and enhanced health care services for our growing Border community.

As reflected in the 2023/24 NSW State Budget Infrastructure Statement, \$538M (noting \$20M additionally to be provided by the Commonwealth) makes direct reference to a major redevelopment of the Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital, i.e., Albury Hospital to improve patient safety and increase the capability and responsiveness of the health service to meet future health needs.

Respective governments at the time of the announcement, confirmed that funding was being provided for a new clinical service building to house state of the art intensive care, maternity services, paediatrics, neonatal care and additional theatres, outpatient and treatment spaces and construction of a multi-level carpark.

Furthermore, on 16 October 2023 when releasing the Master Plan, you both reconfirmed that the project will deliver a mix of new and refurbished facilities at the Albury Hospital campus, including:

- more medical and surgical beds
- new operating theatres
- expansion of outpatient and specialist treatment spaces
- a new Intensive Care Unit (ICU)
- relocation of maternity and newborn services
- new children's ward
- contemporary new adult acute mental health inpatient unit to replace Nolan House
- additional car parking, including a multi-deck carpark
- a new helipad

We are now in the concept planning phase with NSW Health Infrastructure and have already had to sensitively concede, through scope prioritisation, that this investment will not deliver the Government's policy intent of a single-site hospital, reducing duplication in services such as surgery and anaesthetics and co-locating acute and sub-acute services. Conversely, the planning horizon for Victorian health services is 15 years, whilst for reasons still not clear to AWH, this has been reduced to just 10 years, in line with NSW health planning guidelines.

As such, sub-acute hospital services (Geriatric Evaluation and Management, Palliative Care, Rehabilitation) and three (3) existing operating theatres will remain at Wodonga Hospital. We are unclear about when the Wodonga emergency department can be closed, as the new Albury emergency department capacity will only meet current demand, when opened in February 2024.

We now find ourselves in the position of having to consider further value management elements to bring scope in line with the available budget threshold envelope, further eroding the delivery of the publicly stated policy intent.

AWH is currently being challenged further with having to consider the removal of a helipad, options for paediatrics remaining in the old campus footprint, diagnostic services being constrained and education, training and research not afforded space in the new build, to cover off on a few of the many extensive matters currently under consideration for value management.

The above will lead to leaving more services at Wodonga or in their current outdated state, thereby compromising further on design and overall amenity and safety for patients and staff.

This is occurring concurrently with a highly political community campaign for the release of the Clinical Services Plan Review 2022 capacity requirements and comparison with what is being delivered in the current scope for the Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital Project. We understand that this document is currently the subject of further Freedom of Information requests.

AWH have not been advised on how the current endorsed infrastructure requirements (beds, operating theatres) have been derived, where these differ from the Clinical Services Plan Review 2022 which was accepted by the then Master Plan Project Control Group in September 2022 (with joint health membership from NSW and Victoria).

It is important that you are advised of our challenged position in relation to the policy intent and aspirations of Government, our Board and Executive.


We are confident you would expect to be kept reliably informed and have notified Health Infrastructure, Ministry of Health NSW and the Department of Health in Victoria, of our intention in writing to you as respective Ministers for Health.

In closing, we are finding the current situation challenging for us to champion with our clinicians and community and would appreciate the opportunity for discussions directly with you, to ensure that the Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital Project meets with government policy intent and most importantly, community expectation.


Albury Wodonga is one of the largest regional cities in Australia and is in fact, one regional metropolis, not two. Our comparator cities, such as Bendigo, Ballarat and Wagga Wagga, each enjoy consolidated hospital services. The likely reality that our city will need to continue to endure a split acute/sub-acute hospital configuration despite the generous contributions of the Victorian and New South Wales Governments is grossly disappointing and for the Board and Executive leadership of AWH, it is not in keeping with our duty to provide the safest and best care possible to our patients and community without us elevating these concerns to you.

Yours sincerely

s47F


/ Bill Appleby
Chief Executive Officer

s47F


Jonathan Green
Chair, AWH Board of Directors