

The Hon. John Hatzistergos  
Minister for Health,  
Parliament House,  
Macquarie Street,  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2005



**RURAL HEALTH MATTERS.  
THE STATE OF HOSPITALS & HEALTH SERVICES IN  
THE TUMUT DISTRICT**

Dear Minister,

We, the citizens of Tumut, Batlow and district wish to bring to your attention our concern at the advanced state of decay of the hospitals at Tumut and Batlow. Both hospitals are now unsafe as well as being inefficient.

This situation is unacceptable and we insist that your government honour its past promises and replace both hospitals immediately.

For the past decade, the people of Tumut Shire have worked very hard to improve our economy, society and environment. Our efforts, through the various community groups, local government and business organisations have been spectacularly successful and we are all very proud of our achievements. We are a progressive Shire.

As you would know, Tumut has attracted major players in the timber, manufacturing, horticulture and agricultural industries. These industries have brought their own problems as well as economic benefits, but through a process of consultation, cooperation and creative thinking we have been able to solve most of those problems.

We are a pro-active society. As a result, our economy is now booming. Some of the recent large industrial plants are now set to expand and double in size. Other businesses are keen to locate to the area. We are recognised as a growth area.

A lot of effort went into creating this economic activity and this involved a certain amount of risk to the stability of our towns. Citizens had to consider the implications of increased population and provide modern technology and infrastructure to support these new industries. We therefore sought and were given assurances from our governments that projected shortcomings e.g. the need for new hospitals in Batlow and Tumut, would be met.

The citizens of this area were given to understand that Tumut District Hospital, built in 1899 by local people, would be rebuilt. A decade ago, it was officially deemed to be in poor condition and in need of replacement. We understood that the hospital was prioritised and would be replaced with a new hospital by the end of 10 yrs. Batlow Hospital, in extremely poor condition, was also to be replaced with a new MPS.

In 2005, both hospitals should have been under construction. Instead, we find that we are being asked, yet again, to wait many years and make do with further bandaid renovations.

The Tumut Health Services Plan describes the condition of Tumut District Hospital and Community Health buildings as “very poor” and affecting the safety and efficiency of health services. Batlow Hospital, which has now had its radiology unit removed, is still no further advanced due to a \$2.8m shortfall in the allocation of funding.

With respect, Minister, we wish to advise you that the citizens of this district will not accept any further delay in the construction of our new hospitals.

The provision of modern medical facilities is vital not only for human health, but to the health of our economy, something which we have worked hard to sustain and will not see jeopardised by bureaucratic procrastination. We will not stand by quietly and see our hard work undermined by the deterioration of our hospitals and health facilities through the non provision of funding.

We therefore respectfully ask that your government allocate the necessary funding immediately and give us a guaranteed commitment to commence construction of new hospitals at Tumut and Batlow without further delay.

Yours faithfully

Mrs S J Swann & Mrs P Webb  
Coordinators for Concerned Citizens of Tumut Shire  
P O Box 132  
TUMUT NSW 2720

cc: The Premier of NSW, Mr Morris Iemma,  
Editor, Tumut & Adelong Times

Encl: 43 pages signed by concerned citizens in Wynyard St, Tumut between 9am-5pm  
Fri 28<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2005.

P.S. Signatures were at the rate of 1 every 29.5 secs, (all day) and represent > 15% of Tumut’s town population. Some listed as visitors were actually locals working elsewhere. Tourists were included as they, too, may require a hospital. The signatures were taken from passing pedestrians and represent a “snapshot” of public opinion. Without exception, those who signed were eager to sign and hopeful that the government will listen to the people.

We therefore extend to you an invitation to attend the public meeting to be held this coming Thursday at 5.30pm at the Tumut RSL Club, Russell St, Tumut to discuss this matter.