

# No More Bandaids



## New Tumut Hospital

**NOW !**

**Health Services,  
Where We Live.**

Written by the contributors. Co-ordinated by Sue Swann & Pat Webb (Tumut, NSW).

# Rural Health Matters

*Comments on the state  
of  
hospitals and medical facilities  
in the  
Tumut District.*



## TUMUT SHIRE COUNCIL

Tumut Shire is a vibrant community with strong economic growth prospects. A fundamental pre-requisite for any healthy population is the existence of a broad range of affordable and accessible health services.



The Tumut Shire Council support community action that is designed to reinforce the need for relevant health options. Council's Social Plan has recently been revised to focus on nine key directions and strategies to improve the quality of life and health and well-being of particular social groups within the community.

Council has also supported the existing Tumut Hospital Committee, which was founded in 1999 with express aim of acquiring a new hospital for Tumut.

In addition, Council has endorsed the current Tumut Health Service Plan 2006-2011. The main purpose of this plan is to provide an outline of the health care services to be provided in the Tumut Local Government area to meet the current and future needs of the our Community.

The combined resources of the Plans and Committees mentioned above, together with the current community responses will assist the Tumut Community to obtain and maintain the level of health services required.

*Cr Gene Vanzella, Mayor*

## VISY PULP & PAPER MILL, TUMUT



I fully support the campaign for funding for a new Tumut District Hospital. One of the reasons Visy chose to locate in Tumut was because it is a progressive town, and receptive to our plans to build a unique factory using the best technology available. As a major employer in Tumut we understand that the provision of adequate health services is essential to a growing community. Without appropriate modern infrastructure it is impossible to attract and keep doctors, specialists and other allied health services who provide the health care to which all Tumut residents are entitled. More than 100 years after the people of Tumut built its first hospital it is well and truly time to build a new hospital with new technology.

*Richard Pratt AC,  
Chairman, Visy Industries*

## TUMUT REAL ESTATE

Whilst Tumut Shire is well served by its current hospital there is no doubt that infrastructure wise and facilities wise it is lagging behind equivalent towns like Young and Cooma (and other?).

The possibility of enhancing Tumut Hospital's Medical Imaging to the stage where it becomes a money making enterprise capable of providing surplus funding to go towards other medical infrastructure is to be encouraged and seems to be a must – do project.

If as with the Visy Mill the whole town could get behind the “New Tumut Hospital” project it would be hoped that the goal could be achieved some what sooner than is currently suggested by those holding the Government purse strings.

Tumut's economy and work force has had its biggest boost in the last 5 years thanks to Visy in the most past, but there are many out-of-towners that will settle and retire in Tumut if we have a top notch hospital and a retirement facility.

*Leigh Rootsey,  
Tumut Real Estate*

## TUMUT RSL

I support the aim of accelerating the proposed time frame for the building of a new hospital in Tumut.

The last major overhaul and refurbishment of the existing hospital was carried out in the 1960 era to accommodate the construction of the Snowy Mountains Hydro Scheme Talbingo, Blowering Dam and associated works.

The present state of the hospital is symptomatic of all Government operated infrastructure in Australia today, as there has been no major works carried out in the last 30-40 years. It does seem to me that today's politician's attitude is that if a facility is in need of repair or rebuilding then they will close it down or sell it off.

I would also like to offer my congratulations to the staff of our hospital who do such a sterling job, under conditions so clearly less than ideal.

*Frank Delany,  
Tumut Sub Branch, Returned Soldiers' League*

## **TUMUT MEDICAL PRACTICE**

I came to Batlow as a general practitioner in 1994 and I have dedicated my life to the service of medical science and to healing the sick and try to do this to the best of my ability. I and my family love the district and its people. My wife and I now have practices in both Batlow and Tumut and we have committed ourselves to offering modern medical facilities to patients.



It saddens me to see the deterioration of the hospitals in both those towns which deserve modern facilities appropriate to the needs of both communities. Batlow hospital urgently needs replacing and has been allocated \$7.2 million but this is short of the amount needed to bring it to a proper standard. A modern, well equipped hospital is vital to the wellbeing of the Batlow people. I urge both the State and Commonwealth governments to provide the full funding now so that no more time is lost and Batlow can move forward.

Tumut's hospital, according to recent written and verbal statements from our health administrators, is also in a very poor condition. It also needs urgent replacement.

I fully support any effort to expedite the building of a new hospital in Tumut.

*Dr Tedo Haider, MBBS AMEC MCPS RACRRM*

## **HoME McDougall & Cruise Pty. Ltd.**

I believe that with Tumut and Districts' ever increasing population, both in numbers and aging, and also our area becoming more and more popular with tourists and visitors, that it is long overdue to have our hospital facilities brought up to a standard to cater for future generations and our needs. The hospital upgrade is required so that specialist treatment can be provided in a local environment against having to travel long distances to larger centres.

*John Cruise,  
Director, McDougall & Cruise Pty Ltd*

## **TUMUT & DISTRICT NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE INC.**

The Tumut & District Neighbourhood Centre Inc. fully supports the Community campaign for a new hospital.

All members of our Local Government Area of over 12,000 residents have a right of access to adequate medical facilities and treatment.

We, at the Neighbourhood Centre, are aware of residents who have not received treatment, mainly those on low income and unable to access the required treatment.

We need a new hospital that is fully equipped with fully trained and adequate staff.

A commitment from the NSW State Government to fund the building of the hospital, not in 10 years time, but now is needed NOW.

*A Cunningham,  
Vice President, Tumut Neighbourhood Centre Inc. (for the Committee)*

## **TUMUT REGION - DEVELOPING NATURALLY INC.**

Tumut shire is recognised as a country growth centre and the town of Tumut a regional hub. Potential residents consider a number of factors before moving to a new community, including job opportunities, recreational choices, the natural environment, educational resources and medical facilities. High standard medical services contribute to a town's attractiveness for new residents and new business development. TRDN supports the community in its aspirations for healthy living in our place.

TRDN sees the opportunity for Tumut to be a beacon in the provision of health infrastructure and services in rural and regional communities.

*Peter Becker,  
Executive Officer, Tumut Region - Developing Naturally Inc.*

## **CHIT CHAT COFFEE SHOPPE**

I have recently been diagnosed with cancer and have experienced great difficulty accessing and affording some of the medical treatment I need. To access ultrasound I have had to travel out of town, an added cost and inconvenience as I have then to close my business for the day. Some of the costs involved with ultrasound have been \$275 and over \$300 which I have been required to pay in full at the time of service. If I were to have had these tests done in Canberra or Sydney, I would have been bulk billed and had the results within hours.

Although the staff at our local hospital have been terrific, it is obvious that we need a new hospital. Maternity has no privacy and is pressed for space. Also, there are no facilities for caesarian births. My daughter had to be transferred 100kms to Wagga Wagga for the birth of her baby. Electric beds are needed - when patients who cannot move need repositioning, they have to call a nurse for help, thus taking the nurse from other duties. If all beds were electric, the patients would have more independence and nurses would not have to be interrupted from other duties all the time.

I understood a new hospital was just around the corner. We need one now, not years down the track.

*Bronwyn Annetts,*  
Proprietor, Chit Chat Coffee Shoppe

## **CONNECTION MEDICAL CENTRE**

Connection Medical Centre fully supports the Tumut community call for State and Federal funding for a new hospital. Having been part of the both the Tumut medical and social community for many years, we fully appreciate the need for improved and more comprehensive health services for our community. Tumut is in need of increased medical services such as imaging, anaesthetic, obstetric and surgical specialties to name but a few. It is through the provision of quality resources such as a new hospital with modern facilities that Tumut will be able to attract practitioners in these and other fields. Our rural community deserves the same level of services that are afforded to our regional and urban communities.

Associate Practitioners  
Connection Medical Centre Tumut

## **MY FAIR LADY (LINGERIE AND GIFT SHOP)**

Tumut needs a new hospital to replace the present one which was opened in 1900. With the old hospital it will become increasingly difficult to attract younger doctors, nursing staff etc.

Members of our community should not have to leave their families and familiar surroundings to go to a hospital in other centres. This can be very traumatic for many people irrespective of their age, and can delay their progress to recovery.

Tumut is regarded as a regional centre for this area, but without a new hospital our growth in all areas can be retarded.

*Shirley Thompson,*  
Proprietor, My Fair Lady.

## **SNOWY PHYSIOTHERAPY**

I feel that the South West Slopes has been a backwater as far as medical services and allied health is concerned extending from Gundagai to Tumbarumba, Tarcutta to Cabramurra. There is no obvious reason why this should be the case considering the progressive nature of the region. In particular the timber, manufacturing, horticulture and agriculture industries. When we are located halfway between Canberra and Wagga Wagga it seems strange that we can't harness technology to foster working relationships between these centres which would assist encouraging professionals into the region.

In addition, the state of the current hospital and community health facilities are certainly not assisting in attracting staff to work in Tumut, particularly in the allied health areas. Presently, as has been the case for some time, allied health workers, like their medical colleagues, are encouraged by remuneration and travel opportunities to seek employment overseas.

Improvements in the infrastructure, competitive salaries and development of services, in addition to better marketing of the region, could only help to persuade them to do otherwise. After all, those familiar with the area know that it has much to offer.

*Paul Stepto,*  
Physiotherapist, Snowy Physiotherapy.

### **MWC Accounting Pty. Ltd., CPA AUSTRALIA**

The most important part of our contribution to Tumut is to maintain existing Business and as a by-product to attempt to attract new enterprises to our area. As you are aware existing and new enterprises need people.

To continue the development of Tumut and District, it is absolutely essential that we have the most up-to-date medical facilities.

This also leads to the ability of our area to attract and keep first rate medical providers.

Tumut needs and must have a new Hospital.

Your early attention to this matter will be greatly appreciated.

*Michael W. Collins, B. Bus FCPA Director (Accountant)*

### **CANCER VOICES OF NSW**

As the Rural coordinator of Cancer Voices of New South Wales, I find it very frustrating that there is no bulk billing available for the service of ultrasounds had by low income patients within the Tumut area. It is public knowledge that a private provider offers this service and therefore has high prices on ultrasounds. I have had cancer patients that are on Centrelink benefits come to me asking is there some help they could obtain financially through the Cancer Council of New South Wales because of the high prices being charged by this private provider. If not, the patient goes without the ultrasound. These problems within the public health service should not be there. Patients from this area should be able to stay within the area to have things like an ultrasound.

*T.G.Smith,  
Cancer Voices of Australia (Resident of Adelong)*

### **RIBBONS HAIRDESIGN**

As a local business woman for the past 10 years regional growth is most important to me. Having a new, modern state of the art hospital is a must in Tumut's regional growth.

Growth in Tumut's region will only come by way of new business attraction if we have the correct facilities to fulfill people's personal and family basic requirements. I have three children also, and if the growth of our region does not continue they will most likely have to move to larger areas for employment, so growth is of utmost importance.

A new Tumut hospital will secure growth and greater health facilities for our families and friends. It is not a hope - it is a must.

*Debra Millerick,  
Proprietor, Ribbons Hairdesign*

### **TUMUT LIONS CLUB**

Whether a long term local resident or a recent arrival to Tumut, the availability or lack of adequate health services is something that is of the utmost importance to every community member. The Greater Southern Area Health Service (GSAHS) has responsibility for a huge area comprising many smaller towns as well as major centres such as Wagga Wagga and Albury, all with valid and competing interests in obtaining services. The financial problems besetting GSAHS, whether because of insufficient funding, mismanagement of funding, or a combination of both, do not inspire confidence that the needs of the Tumut community will be met, despite the work that has gone into the current Area Health Plan. Whilst it is important for preventative strategies to be put in place to promote good health, and for improvement in Community Health services, there nevertheless remains the issue of the antiquated facilities at Tumut Hospital which are far from what should be acceptable for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It should not be forgotten that Tumut is a centre that is not only working hard to attract business, but it is also a major holiday attraction on the route to the snowfields, and to the coastal resorts of the south coast.

The dedicated nursing staff should not have to put up with the inferior facilities and neither should the people of Tumut. It is time to reconsider funding priorities and to ensure that the community does not have to wait indefinitely for decent health facilities and a new hospital.

*Phyllis Darragh,  
Secretary, Tumut Lions Club*

## **G. & J. GROVES PTY. LTD., LOGGING CONTRACTORS**

This letter serves to support the need to upgrade the Tumut Hospital as a matter of urgency.

In light of the recent expansion of forest based industries in the Tumut Shire the need for a modern medical facility is paramount.

Tumut, within the last few years, has expanded its population base with the commissioning of the new Visy Pulp and Paper Mill. It is likely that our population will rise again within the next few years should the second stage expansion proceed.

A Shire with such a strong local economy demands a medical facility that can adequately service the existing population with the professionalism it deserves, whilst attracting suitably qualified medical staff. Furthermore, the ongoing need for the area to attract a skilled and talented workforce is hampered by the existing facilities.

At present the hospital lags severely behind other communities, and is not aligned with achieving the above goals.

Should further information be required please do not hesitate in contacting the undersigned.

*Geoff Groves,*  
Managing Director, G. & J. Groves Pty Ltd, Logging Contractors.

## **COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF NSW**

Following a public meeting in 1999 in which Tumut C.W.A. was involved, a Committee was formed to secure a new hospital for Tumut Shire. Some progress has been made but we still have an almost dysfunctional hospital which makes it very difficult to attract doctors, nurses, and allied staff. Also some patients, who should be able to receive treatment at Tumut, have to go to Wagga Base or other hospitals.

A modern hospital with modern technology is also required to ensure business continues to move to our town. This urgently needed hospital would relieve the pressure on large regional hospitals.

*Nathalie Pidsley,*  
President, Tumut Branch, C.W.A. of NSW

## **FARMER & FORMER TUMUT SHIRE COUNCILLOR**

As a ratepayer of the Tumut Shire I want to add my support for a new Tumut Hospital to be built as soon as possible.

Tumut is the hub of the shire which comprises four towns. Adelong and Talbingo do not have a hospital, Batlow's hospital is very old and needs to be replaced also.

That leaves Tumut which as has been stated is a rabbit warren with out-dated equipment. Why should we have to put up with these low standards of health care in this day and age, particularly as money seems always easy to be found for other dubious projects.

One must ask the question, is the decision to put a new hospital on the back burner a political one ?

*Mark T. Arragon*  
"Condonblonga", Adelong, 2729

## **GILMORE RESIDENTS**

The new hospital should be of a contemporary design which will enable it to be adapted to current and future service requirements to avoid unnecessary distress of family separation.

The cost of building Tumut Hospital is the cheapest part of providing adequate health service.

Personnel adequately trained to use equipment for Pathology, Ultrasound, ECG, EEG, and X-ray.

Specialist electronic consultation resulting from these tests be available to medical personnel for efficient diagnosis enabling speedy assessment and treatment.

Casualty and Outpatient Services to be provided in-house.

The Hospital should cater for minor surgical procedures, obstetrics and non surgical treatment of fractures.

*Col and Jan Locke,*  
884 East Gilmore Road, Gilmore, NSW 2720