

What A New Hospital Would Mean For Us

Stories From Our Border Communities
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It's time for the Federal Government to fund a new world-class hospital on the border

Albury Wodonga Health runs one of the busiest regional health services in the state. As the population grows, it is only going to get busier. People from all over Indi use Albury Wodonga Health services. We need a new hospital on the border before it is over capacity.

Within 15 years, the population on the border will grow by a third. By 2040 we will need a hospital capable of handling 150,000 emergency presentations, 40,000 surgeries and 1,900 births every year.

As a nurse and midwife who has worked in the North East the majority of my career, I know how much stronger and healthier our communities will be with world-class facilities from maternal to aged care.

Albury Wodonga Health is finalising a masterplan that will clearly set out the details of the health service our community will need for decades to come. The federal and state governments need to step up and commit funding.

If we had a world-class hospital in Albury Wodonga, people requiring complex medical treatment wouldn't be separated from their families, alone in hospital in Melbourne. Sick babies could be looked after in a neo-natal intensive care unit close to home. Specialist appointments wouldn't take a three and a half hour drive each way. Ongoing treatment wouldn't mean moving away from family supports and home comforts.



A new hospital would improve our lives in many different ways

For some, it's about staying close to loved ones who need **specialist care without travelling to Melbourne.**

For others, it gives them peace of mind that Albury Wodonga is **the best place to start a family or retire.**

And for others, it's about building our workforce and encouraging medical professionals in the cities to take up **exciting new training and research** in Albury Wodonga.



I've taken our stories to Canberra to show the Federal Government what a game changer this would be for us

More than 750 border community residents signed my petition to the Federal Minister for Health Greg Hunt, calling on the Federal Government to fund a new hospital for Albury Wodonga.

Hundreds of you have also shared with me what a new world-class hospital in Albury Wodonga would mean for you.

I'm pleased to share some of those stories in this report.

The care we need, close to home

"This would be a game changer for us in the regions! No more trips to Royal Melbourne! The travel, traffic, parking, trauma when you have a chronic health condition (or more than one, as I do) is a real burden. This is essential for those who cannot drive easily or negotiate the public transport system."

Jennifer, Benalla

"In the past 10 years my wife has had two life threatening incidents requiring hospitalising in Melbourne ICUs. The health care was amazing but it was difficult for our family to be near her at that time. It would be so much better if there was a world class hospital on the border."

David, Myrtleford

"It would make me feel safer than I do now. I always go to Melbourne for any surgery I might need."

Annette, Wodonga

"I have had to travel to Melbourne over 30 times in the last 4 years for specialist allergy treatment. A larger upgraded hospital would allow for expanded specialist services and reduce the need for health related travel for people like me."

Name Withheld, Mt Beauty

"We recently had to travel the four hour drive to Melbourne, during COVID restrictions, and pay exorbitant hotel fees and travel costs up front just so that my family member could have expert neurosurgery. He could not be kept in the hospital any longer than two days, so we travelled the four hours home again with only myself to monitor him and drive, stopping for checks and adjustments along the way. I had to take additional time off work, as well as arrange for someone else to look after my son as he was not permitted to come with us due to COVID-19 restrictions."

Lyn, Wodonga

"My husband was air lifted to Melbourne recently in a potentially life threatening situation. I've never felt so frightened or isolated not being able to go with him or be there. Living here also concerns me for our future as we age. Will we be able to access our specialists in Melbourne when we are no longer driving? How hard will it be when we have mobility problems or financially cant afford the trips?"

Anthea, Lavington



"I've been visiting Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre for over 4 year now on a regular basis, and it is an amazing facility. If a new hospital could be built that would reach these same standards, that would be an amazing resource. I currently travel daily from Benalla Shire for radiation, but for anything more than a PET scan I need to go to Melbourne."

Anne-Marie, Goorambat

"We are a young regional family, and my recent experience battling breast cancer as a young woman and mother highlighted just how vital regional access is not just for the patients, yet also the family."

Elise, Mt Beauty

"Albury Wodonga is an important regional centre that is continually expanding and should have a health system that meets its growing needs. A world class hospital would be a huge advantage to us as we are both pensioners and need specialist services.

Pam is 67 and has rheumatoid arthritis. Due to the current shortage of specialists in our area she has to travel to Melbourne to see her rheumatologist because he is based in Melbourne and not available in Albury when she needs to see him for her government-approved medications. As she gets older and her condition deteriorates this will become more and more difficult for her.

James is 84 with a heart condition so he needs regular monitoring. We are both experiencing long waiting times for our local GP which indicates that there is already a shortage of generalist doctors in our area, let alone specialist doctors. We want and deserve better medical services in our region including more GPs and specialist medical services and a world class hospital."

Pam and James, Bellmead Wodonga

Supporting our healthcare workers

"Better access to state of the art health facilities, equitable to those in the cities, will improve the health and wellbeing of my family and the wellbeing of clients I work with as a social worker."

Dominic, Wodonga

"We absolutely need this. I am a local GP in Wodonga. We desperately need more services!"

Elsa, Beechworth

"As an Ambulance Community Officer I see first hand the struggles of getting patients into emergency. A new hospital to cover such a broad and growing region is going to be essential in the future. I'm not getting any younger either, I may need it down the track too!"

Phillip, Mt Beauty

"The Albury Wodonga hospital staff deserve a world-class facility. They work hard."

Teresa, Yackandandah

"Working in the health service, I know that patient care is impacted every day by barriers which exist due to the multiple campuses and lack of specialist health services. Our growing community needs improved services and facilities."

Name Withheld, Wodonga

"As a nurse working on both sides of the border through covid times, I can see many ways a larger hospital would benefit both of the communities, especially in the emergency departments."

Courtney, Lake Hume Village

"I worked in the Critical Care Unit at the present Hospital for several years - so I absolutely know how much the surrounding community would benefit from increased resources - especially in the area of first line cardiac care."

Iain, Wangaratta

We're growing and we're ageing

"We are a couple in our mid/late 60s and are both realising that a good regional hospital is fundamental to our ongoing health and well-being in this part of rural Victoria."

Jennifer, Stanley

"My partner receives great service from the Cancer Centre but it will be unable to cope with a big influx of extra patients in the future as the population grows. We strongly support the need for a new, world class hospital in Albury Wodonga."

Jennifer, Gooramadda

"The population is growing. The number of adventure sports being done around the region is also growing and we need an easily accessible hospital for them too."

Michael, Beechworth



"The population is increasing in Albury Wodonga every day. It's easy to see more traffic on roads nowadays. The maternity service is great, but it services such a large area."

Puneet, Wodonga

"Having older family members in the North East means they will need to access healthcare more frequently as they age. Improved access to specialised and extended medical supports in this region will be vital to their ongoing independence and ability to remain at home and age in place."

Kim, Thornbury

"My frail parents lived in Albury in the last year of their lives, with me in Wodonga. It was most traumatic travelling to Melbourne for treatment for each of them on numerous occasions."

Name Withheld

Attracting the best and brightest

"When it comes to staffing and medical specialists it's been proven time and time again: build it and they will come!"

Rod, Wodonga

"We need up to date facilities to allow medical procedures, education, and research to proceed ahead to match future requirements. Pleasant and relevant facilities assist in attracting the brightest and progressive experts."

Margaret, Molyullah

"I have seen the large population increase in this area and the transient nature of the medical profession. This concerns me with a growing need and reluctance of health professionals to commit to long term residency in our current health areas. A bigger modern hospital is required to engage and enthuse a more positive long term answer."

Andrew, Wodonga

"I am involved with the Regional Trials Network. We need up to date and capable facilities to ensure the future of clinical trials across the region. It will also attract researchers to the area. We need the government to commit to regional areas in line with metro."

Kathleen, Bandiana

"We need to be able to attract and keep doctors in our area. Providing onsite training for them is the key to attracting them and keeping them in our district."

Jill, Wodonga

"A more streamlined service, on one campus, would allow for greater learning opportunities for local nursing and allied health students. More job opportunities and better services for all patients!"

Name Withheld, Wodonga

It's smart regional development

"Funding and construction of a new hospital here would help one of the most major urban centres between Sydney and Melbourne on the Hume freeway. Decentralisation growth in Albury Wodonga is inevitable. It would be costly and reckless to ignore the health demand in this region, which also serves surrounding communities as far as Corowa and Deniliquin, Chiltern and Rutherglen for example. And it also serves many farmers in local regions too. If a new hospital was to be allocated, it would boost the health outcomes and welfare of the great people in these communities and local economy near and far. "

Roy, Wodonga

"The government wants regions to grow yet will not provide all of the critical infrastructure that is needed by regional communities! This is something they can commit to."

Eleanore, Wodonga

"A new hospital would make a huge difference for the people on both sides of the border and from Corryong to Corowa, between Wangaratta to Wagga and beyond. Midway between Melbourne and Sydney on the Hume highway. Close to the snowfields and Murray River. It just makes sense!"

Irene, Walwa

"Wouldn't have to go to Bendigo hospital to get a pacemaker. Hubby had to have an emergency pacemaker put in last week and needed to go to Bendigo hospital as there no other options. Albury Wodonga needs a modern first class hospital like Bendigo. We're a regional centre too. It should all be able to be done here. "

Jennie, West Wodonga

**"People in the regions
deserve the same health
care as Sydney and
Melbourne."**

Bronwyn, Wangaratta

"Regions need a more easily accessible hospital service to provide all the timely medical support that is not available in small regional towns. If we plan right, it can be coordinated through a major hospital rather than the current, fragmented silo approach."

Elaine, Mansfield



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