



The Hon d Layzell MP
Member for Upper Hunter
20 Bridge Street
Muswellbrook NSW 2333

Gummun Place Aged Care Hostel, Merriwa - Securing the Future

Dear Dave

I am writing to you in respect of the Gummun Place Hostel, a small aged-care facility in Merriwa. Gummun Place Hostel is in an MMM5 community (Modified Monash Model, category 5).

Our facility was built from the ground up with donations, fundraising and grant applications from our community. We are very proud of the facility.

The facility is currently under Council management and has been running at a deficit of some \$400,000 to \$600,000 a year (with the last financial year being one of the larger deficits). This deficit, among other things, puts our facility in jeopardy.

In response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, the Australian Government has initiated several reforms aimed at improving aged care services nationwide, with particular attention to the challenges faced in MMM5 and other rural and remote areas. Ongoing efforts include enhancing system access, workforce development, and implementing sustainable funding models to ensure high-quality aged care for all Australians

As a facility in an MMM5 community, the Merriwa District Progress Association has major concerns regarding our ability to meet the changing needs of the aged care sector – specifically in relation to the requirements being set down as a result of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. Compounding the issue is the fact that the current manager – the local Council – clearly wants to divest themselves of operating the facility.

Many of the issues outlined in the report from the Royal Commission, Final Report: Care, Dignity and Respect, are reflected in our facility. For example, we face insufficient staffing, fewer care options, geographic isolation, and are struggling to ensure equity of access to aged care. Many of our residents have family close by. If the facility does not remain open, we fear the residents' overall wellbeing will be compromised, family and community cohesion will be lost, hospital beds will be taken up with people who should otherwise be in specialised aged care – to name just a few of the issues. Some additional issues are posted on our website at <https://www.mdpa.org.au/current-issues/>.

I am writing to ask for assistance with locating funding (at Federal or State level) that will help us ensure we retain this vital community asset. We would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to discuss this as soon as practicable. We want a facility that is financially viable, provides the highest standard of care, will meet new legislative requirements, ensures our residents remain in the community, and allows families to stay connected through the generations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Stephen Gowlland'.

Stephen Gowlland
President

Tuesday, 28 January 2025

MERRIWA DISTRICT PROGRESS ASSOCIATION INC.