

Hon Anika Wells MP  
Minister for Aged Care  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

(Anika.Wells.MP@aph.gov.au)

**Gummun Place Aged Care Hostel, Merriwa - Securing the Future**

Dear Anika

I am writing to you in respect of Gummun Place Hostel, a small aged-care facility in Merriwa NSW (in the Upper Hunter Shire). 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 but recently it has become a highly sensitive political issue in our district – and will remain so until the question of the facility's future is determined.

The facility is currently under the management of the Upper Hunter Shire Council 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 – coupled with being in an MMM5 community and the impending changes from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety – puts our facility in grave jeopardy.

Our community goals for Gummun Place Hostel align directly with your vision “to reform aged care [and] restore dignity to older Australians”. However, as a facility in an MMM5 community, we find the ability to meet this vision extremely difficult.

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.

I am writing to you to ask you for two things:

- 1) We would like a meeting with your office to discuss your thoughts about how facilities such as ours can continue to operate as a community asset (as opposed to being part of a corporate conglomerate – bear in mind that corporate conglomerates are not necessarily a prime solution given we had to have a Royal Commission into aged care).
- 2) We are seeking financial assistance so that this vital community asset that can be financially viable, provides the highest standard of care, ensures our residents remain in the community, and allows families to stay connected through the generations.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Gowlland  
President

Tuesday, 28 January 2025

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**MERRIWA DISTRICT PROGRESS ASSOCIATION INC.**