

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

This petition of residents of Goodooga and surrounds in north western New South Wales draws to the attention of the House: That our Community strongly opposes the downgrade and reduction in Health & Emergency Services provided by Greater Western Area Health Service (GWAHS) & Ambulance NSW. Our local Ambulance Service has ceased, meaning a minimum wait of 40 minutes (79km) from Lightning Ridge depending on availability, plus return travel before being flown out to Dubbo Base Hospital. Over 19 months ago GWAHS gave 14 days notice of the removal of our Emergency bed and Registered Nurse. Due to media pressure they conducted an Independent Review, we completed a Health Impact Assessment and endless hours of consultation, none of which have been included in the new Plan. The ongoing threat of closure of the Emergency bed is devastating to an already isolated rural community comprised largely of Indigenous Australians (98%), mostly ageing or youth. Is this how we want to CLOSE THE GAP in New South Wales?

We therefore ask the House to pressure the Health Minister and Managerial staff of Greater Western Area Health Service to secure the future of our 24 hour Emergency Service and reinstate our Ambulance Service ASAP.