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# Special Commission of Inquiry into Healthcare Funding

## Outline of anticipated evidence

**Name:** Mr Jay Nankivell  
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**Occupation:** General Manager of Broken Hill City Council

1. This is an outline of the evidence that is anticipated that the witness will give to the Special Commission of Inquiry into Healthcare Funding.
2. I am the General Manager of Broken Hill City Council (**Council**). I have held that role since 31 March 2021 and prior to that held the roles, of Chief Financial Officer and Manager Finance with Broken Hill City Council since June 2016.

### **A. Access to health care in Broken Hill**

3. There are a number of challenges facing the delivery of healthcare in Broken Hill.
4. The Council has become aware of a number of concerns within the community in relation to the availability and accessibility of healthcare in Broken Hill and its surrounding areas.
5. Those concerns include the capacity of the Broken Hill Hospital. As I understand it, the Broken Hill Hospital previously had a larger capacity for admitted patients than it does at present (after the new hospital was built in the early 2000's). The council is aware of concerns that the current capacity of the hospital might not be sufficient to meet the needs of the region, with expected growth to occur over the following years. Adding to the demand on the Broken Hill Hospital, as I understand, there can be a significant number of patients in the hospital that cannot be discharged until a place in an aged care facility becomes available.
6. Previously, access to dentistry services was limited within Broken Hill however that has recently improved since the Rural Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) were able to employ a full-time dentist to provide services into the region.

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7. Currently, the waiting time to see a GP in Broken Hill is about two weeks, and the Council is aware that there are challenges in recruiting and retaining clinicians in the region.
8. The Council is aware of a concern within the community that the members of the board of Far West Local Health District (FWLHD) are not well-known or visible. This has led to a perception within some sections of the community that there is a perceived lack of transparency in the governance of the FWLHD.
9. In my experience, there has been less consultation with Broken Hill City Council (the Council) than what there may have previously been. For example, the FWLHD may consult the Council about proposed infrastructure changes, and broader citywide issues such as housing, childcare, attract/retention of staff and transport but in my experience there is little consultation about the delivery of actual services apart from the Harm Reduction Program with the use of syringes. {
10. The Council is aware that our community is grateful for the NSW Health Isolated Patients Travel and Assistance Scheme (IPTAAS), which assists with the costs of patients travelling long distances for health services (including to Adelaide for specialist services). However, the scheme could be improved, including by supporting families to travel with patients.

### **B. Aged care in Broken Hill**

11. The Council used to be involved in the running of aged care facilities, however it exited these operations around 2013/14.
12. Southern Cross Care currently operates three aged care sites in Broken Hill, providing approximately 218 aged care beds in total, however not all of these can be filled due to staffing.
13. A barrier to the provision of aged care is the minimum staffing requirements for Registered Nurses in residential aged care facilities. Since July 2023, every aged care facility must have

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at least one Registered Nurse on shift at each facility 24/7, as well as an increase of registered nursing minutes to 40 minutes per resident per day

14. Two of Southern Cross Care's facilities in Broken Hill are neighbours. Prior to the imposition of the minimum staffing requirements, one Registered Nurse (RN) would be rostered on to look after these neighbouring facilities. The RN could walk between the two facilities as required during their shift.
15. Since these minimum staffing requirements came into force, Southern Cross Care has struggled to fill the required registered nursing requirements along with meeting the eight standards of care. Due to this, approximately 40 aged care beds are not in operation as there are not enough RNs available.
16. Southern Cross Care has received funding grants to fill the staffing roster with agency nurses to meet these minimum requirements and keep facilities open, however this doesn't result in being always able to attract registered nurses nor meeting the standards of care due to the transient nature of agency nurses.
17. If Southern Cross Care is not able to attract enough Registered Nurses, the number of available aged care beds will further decrease.

### **C. Council initiatives to attract workforce to rural, regional and remote NSW**

18. Council is in the process of identifying land to increase childcare facilities available in Broken Hill. There are currently two childcare centres in Broken Hill, one for-profit centre and one not-for-profit. Council is in the process of having Crown land adjacent to both centres rezoned so those centres can expand.
19. Council is aware that for every childcare place, there are 7 other children on a waitlist. Council was recently made aware that if there were sufficient childcare placements, around 40 nurses could return to the workforce in the Broken Hill area.

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20. Council is also in the process of planning for the construction of high-density residential housing in Broken Hill CBD for essential workers, which includes Healthcare workers, Education and Police. { In conjunction with the NSW State Government, specifically Property NSW, Health and Housing NSW, there is in principle support in progress to build a number of low-maintenance, one and two-bedroom apartments. The council is in the process of identifying suitable land in the CBD for this project. This is a longer-term project and will likely take around two years before it is underway.

Name: JAY NANKIVEL



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