

NOTICE

SERVICE CHANGES FROM 3 FEB 2023



Dr Puxty and Dr Bolshen will be leaving the West Armidale Medical Centre on 3 February 2023.

Due to chronic rural doctors shortages across Australia we have not yet been able to recruit new GPs to take over the patient lists of Dr Puxty and Dr Bolshen. We are continuing to work to recruit new GPs as quickly as possible.

The doctor shortage is due to the failure of the NSW and Federal Government's rural medical education and training programs to deliver a promised increase in GPs working rurally. Continued underfunding of rural and regional GPs under Medicare has also seen more and more GPs move to major cities or leave the profession.

Following discussions with other practices in Armidale and elsewhere, none have been able to commit to taking on our patients following the departure of Dr Puxty and Bolshen due to the same doctor shortages.

To ensure our patients can continue to access the health and medical care they need, we are putting in place the following interim arrangements:

- retain a local Nurse to work in the West Armidale Medical Centre for procedural care such as wound dressings and checking vitals.
- provide access to a GP via telephone Telehealth for patients from their homes for routine matters.
- provide access to a GP via video at the practice for patients that require physical examination and observation.

As a charity established to help rural and regional communities, we agreed to take over responsibility for the West Armidale Medical Centre to help out Dr Puxty and Bolshen. We will continue to do everything we can, within the limits of our resources, to find a sustainable and ongoing solution to the rural doctor shortage in Armidale

[R]esidents in rural, regional and remote New South Wales have inferior access to health and hospital services, especially for those living in remote towns and locations and Indigenous communities, which has led to instances of patients receiving **substandard levels of care**.
NSW Inquiry into Health Outcomes and Access to Health and Hospital Services in Rural, Regional and Remote New South Wales (2021)

WHAT WE ARE DOING

Over the last few months we have been working to generate support within government to establish a Rural GP training centre at west Armidale. We are currently working with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners to make this a reality. If successful, this will ensure a regular supply of GPs to our practice and other clinics across the New England region.

We have written to our local MPs to seek help to access government financial assistance to cover the shortfall in income, and to help build this new GP training practice, however we have not received any response to date. We will update you if we do!

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Ring or write your MP and let them know:

1. You are a citizen of NSW and Australia and you expect that our governments work together and come up with a solutions immediately to the rural doctor crisis.
2. Let your local MP, Minister for Health, Premier, Opposition Leader and other politicians know that you support a new Rural GP Training Centre in Armidale and ask them to tell you in writing what they plan to do to help. Feel free to post any response to Facebook, Twitter etc.

