

**EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL**

**PUBLIC FORUM**

**Ordinary Meeting of Council on 30 April 2024**

Please refer to the minutes of the [Council Meeting](#) for outcomes of the agenda items.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Subject/Comments</b>	<b>Presentation Provided</b>	<b>Hybrid</b>
Trish Hellier	MR24/001 Eurobodalla Regional Hospital	Yes	In person
Ainsley Ratcliff	MR24/001 Eurobodalla Regional Hospital	No	In person

Good afternoon Mayor, Councillors, General Manager, Staff, Gallery and those comfortable zooming from home. My name is Patricia Hellier from Batemans Bay.

I am here today to speak on the Mayor Minute on today's Agenda.

One of the reason we moved to Batemans Bay some 24 years ago was due to the good reputation of the BB Hospital, the ED and the staff.

My concerns about the closure of the Batemans Bay Hospital and ED was NOT sparked by the first meeting at the BB Soldiers Club. These concerns arose when my hubby attended the BB ED early November 2023. We had a discussion with one of the staff who expressed concerns as to the possibility of the hospital and the ED's closure and the affect this would have of the residents of BB. I decided to ring **MP Michael Hollands office at Bega** and I was told to send an email with my concerns. I did this, I also sent an email to **MP Fiona Phillips office in Nowra**. To this day I have not received a reply to my emails from either of our local members.

We attended the first meeting at the Soldier Club and at the end of the meeting I noted our Mayor standing at the back of the auditorium on approaching the Mayor an older lady came up and spoke to the Mayor and said "You are the Mayor why didn't you speak" the Mayor replied "It is not a council issue it is a State Government issue". Yet here we are today with this very controversial issue on the Council Agenda.

I like a number of other people within the community collected signatures for the petition headed "**I support the Batemans Bay Emergency Department continuing to operate 24hrs a day 7 days a week**". As you would all be aware this petition achieved 18,000 signatures which I believe is the largest number of signatures on a petition for this shire.

I note in this Agenda item in the Executive Summary it repeats Labor's statement that the Eurobodalla Regional Hospital opens at the end of 2025. I find this statement very questionable given that the Bega Regional Hospital earthworks began in February 2013 (**and that does not including the prior planning phase**) the opening of this Hospital was March 2016. Therefore I believe the opening date quoted by Labor for the Eurobodalla Hospital is not credible and is unachievable. It is believed that the Hospital will initially open as a Level 3.

We attended the meeting at the BB Soldiers Club for the presentation of the 18,000 signature petition. I am concerned with statements made by **an online media outlet** which I believe was very bias and one sided. The facts are the unruly behaviour commenced when a Labor supporter stood up waving her arms around shouting out "**Get away from Fiona and get off the stage**" this was being directed at the **Chairman of the Meeting Peter Ryan** as he introduced MP Fiona Phillips, this was not reported along with storming out of the Labor . When Labor left the meeting things settled down until the throwing open of the Auditorium door by MP Fiona Phillips who then proceeded to start shouting – she left and things quietened down again, until the door was thrown open again with shouting from Labor supporter Maureen Searson.

**I support the Mayor's Minute points 1 and 2 - I do not support point 3 at the expense of closing down the BB ED. The walk in clinic is for non urgent cases. Councillors your responsibility when you were elected was to represent the views of he community the petition speaks loud and clear.**

**It needs noting there is no time frame for the Moruya By Pass.**

With the ambulance station situated at Malua Bay, who can estimate the time it would take for an ambulance to get to the north of the shire, to then stabilise the patient and drive to Moruya of course that is providing the Moruya bridge is not gridlocked.

The current **Medicare Bulk Billing Walk in Clinic at Batemans Bay Hospital** is for minor health issues it is NOT an Urgent Care Clinic and the sign states “**Non urgent illness or injury**”. Many people have complained they have had to wait up to 3 hours to be seen by a Dr. **Major health issues are directed to the ED.**

People presenting to Batemans Bay ED – Year ending 2019 were 16,219 – Moruya ED was 11,912. It should be noted that Batemans Bay has 5 nursing homes, the majority of caravan parks and holiday accommodation for this shire.

There are many smaller hospital within 30 minutes to a major hospital those include the following:-

- June Level 2 - Wagga Wagga Level 5 only 23 minutes apart
- Crookwell Level 2 - Goulburn Level 4 only 32 minutes apart
- Harden Level 2 - Young Level 3 only 25 minutes apart
- Bellingen Level 2 - Coff Harbour Level 5 only 25 minutes apart
- Cessnock Level 3 - Maitland Level 4 only 18 minutes apart
- Parkes Level 3 - Forbes level 3 only 28 minutes apart

The current Councils online DA's more than half the DA's lodged are in the North of the shire. This includes a DA in Herarde Street which has a proposal for 57 units, another DA on Beach Road is quoted with a similar amount. It should be noted this also includes a number of DA's listed with a dual occupancy, there is also a 34 and 11 lot subdivision at Malua Bay. This is going to place addition pressure on an already stretched health system.

**I firmly believe that this Petition containing 18,000 signatures overwhelming speaks for the supports to retain the Emergency Department at Batemans Bay and should not be ignored or dismissed.**

Patricia Hellier