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JOINT COUNCIL SUBMISSION CALLS FOR URGENT ACTION ON AMBULANCE RESPONSE TIMES

Towong Shire Council and Indigo Shire Council have made a joint submission to the Inquiry into Ambulance Victoria, raising serious concerns about having the worst ambulance response times in the State.

Data shows that Towong and Indigo Shires have recorded the longest ambulance response times in Victoria since 2019. The issue stems from sustained pressure on the Albury Wodonga Health system, which is directly impacting the ability to deliver timely emergency care to rural communities.

While both Councils deeply appreciate the skill, commitment, and compassion of ambulance first responders and paramedics, the Councils are calling for systemic improvements to better support frontline workers and the communities they serve.

Ambulances are frequently ramped, waiting to offload patients, due to the daily shortage of beds at Albury Wodonga Health.

"The data is clear, our communities are waiting too long for emergency care," said Towong Shire Council Mayor Andrew Whitehead. "This is not a reflection on our paramedics, who do an outstanding job under immense pressure. The delays are caused by hospital bed shortages and ramping, which leads to longer response times. It is not unusual for an ambulance from Corryong to be out of the district for 6-8 hours leaving the community vulnerable in the event of an emergency."

Towong and Indigo Councils are working in partnership to advocate for:

- Additional ambulance resources to bring local response times closer to the state average.
- A new, single-site regional hospital on a greenfield site.

Both councils are 100% committed to supporting their rural communities. Healthcare is the number one priority for our residents and there needs to be a significant improvement in ambulance response times for both our shires. We are calling on the Minister for Health to take urgent action and address these shortcomings.

ENDS

For all enquiries please contact the Towong Shire Communications team using the contact details below.