



**The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP**

Federal Member for New England

Our ref: NE54589

1 July 2025

Mr Stephen Gowlland  
President  
Merriwa District Progress Association Inc  
PO Box 144  
MERRIWA NSW 2329

Via e-mail: merriwaprogress@gmail.com

Dear Stephen

Thank you for your letter of 14 June 2025, further to previous correspondence and my representations to the former Minister for Aged Care, the Hon Anika Wells MP, regarding the future of Gummun Place Hostel at Merriwa, the Association's concerns in relation to a decision by Upper Hunter Shire Council to transfer the operation of the hostel to another provider or to close the facility if another operator cannot be found and the Association's call for the approval of Council's funding application to restore Gummun Place to a suitable standard.

I have noted the additional points raised by the Association and appreciate receiving your letter.

I have e-mailed a letter to the Minister for Aged Care and Seniors, the Hon Sam Rae MP, asking if urgent consideration could be given to the Association's call for the approval of Council's funding application in light of the concerns and points raised in relation to this matter and for his advice as soon as possible.

In addition, I have also e-mailed a letter to Mr Greg McDonald, General Manager, Upper Hunter Shire Council, asking if consideration could be given to the Association's request for Council to discontinue the proposed sale of Gummun Place to a private organisation in light of the concerns raised in your letter and particularly the Association's belief the facility belongs to the community.

I will be in touch with you when I receive replies to my representations and will continue to assist wherever possible to ensure this essential facility within the Merriwa community can continue its operations.

Thank you once again for writing and if I can further assist at any time, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely

The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP  
Federal Member for New England

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