

23 March 2020



Health and Hospital Services in the Warrumbungle Shire

Warrumbungle Council has resolved to take action following the health meeting held in Dunedoo.

“Following the resolution of Council, a public meeting was held in Dunedoo to discuss a number of health-related issues across the Warrumbungle Local Government Area in recent times, particularly at Coolah and Dunedoo” said Councillor Ambrose Doolan, Warrumbungle Shire Council Mayor. “This meeting had been held following approaches by a number of residents expressing concern about some of these issues, and particularly about the availability of doctors and issues at our health service facilities (hospitals), and we had about 110 residents in attendance along with officials.”

“A lot of matters were brought to our attention during the meeting, some of these included: an insufficient number of doctors being available; staff burnt out; the need for permanent staff and not a reliance on agency staff; more support is needed for smaller hospitals; more investment is required in doctors and nurses; and virtual GPs do not fill needs and people still need to travel to Dubbo.”

“It was widely acknowledged that the health issues are not easy to approach and similarly the problems are not unique to the Warrumbungle Shire. It was recognised that: there are not enough doctors in the system; country people will return to the bush so more country people need to be trained; an environment needs to be created for people to work here; the changes in the training of doctors will take time; and there is strong competition for the services of doctors.”

“Councillors in attendance were disappointed to hear some of the senior presenters suggest that the Dunedoo community was not sufficiently welcoming to clinicians. As a Council, we reject that notion and in fact welcome all clinicians to all of our communities.”

“What we need to do, in conjunction with the State and Federal Governments, is to make the Warrumbungle Shire attractive for doctors and health professionals to work within.”

“As a result of the meeting Council has now resolved to:

1. Make representations to the NSW Minister for Health seeking a greater level of energy and resources being placed into rural health services and the Warrumbungle Shire, this is to include greater incentives for Visiting Medical Officers (VMOs);
2. Make representations to the Federal Government on the need to hasten the training of doctors for rural areas;
3. Consider the development of a program to help our communities be more attractive to doctors and health workers.

“We also will have open and ongoing communication with the Local Health District on improving staffing and resourcing of small hospitals, so that doctors and nurses can feel supported and able to perform their clinical duties well” said Cr Doolan.

“What has been particularly good about this meeting has been that channels have been opened with the community and key stakeholders.”

“I appreciate that at a public forum such as this that some can be a little shy about presenting their views and would welcome further contributions. These will then be forwarded to the relevant authority” concluded Cr Doolan.

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