



## MEDIA RELEASE

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**Approved by:** Cr Mark Kellam, Deputy Chair of Central NSW Joint Organisation, Mayor of Oberon Council

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### **CNSWJO Chair welcomes collaborative approach to better Health and Social Care for our Communities**

Central NSW Joint Organisation represents eleven Local Government Areas from Lithgow to Lake Cargelligo, covering a 411kms x 107km spanned area of regional and rural communities. The Board is made up of the eleven Mayors of its member Councils. Health is a priority of the Board. "Local government is at the front line of regional communities it plays a huge part in the health and social care within its community," said Cr Beatty, Chair of Central NSW Joint Organisation

At its recent Board meeting Mr Richard Colbran CEO of the Rural Doctors Network presented and subsequently a subcommittee of Mayors has begun the more detailed work of seeking better health outcomes for our communities. "Local Government is willing to be part of the solution but needs support from State and Federal Governments to optimise our investment. That's why we are delighted to be working with RDN with its social and community focus. Health is so much more than hospitals," said Cr Miller, Mayor of Forbes and Chair of the Central NSW Health Subcommittee.

"Mental health issues are worse in regional Australia and this is exacerbated by Covid, drought and natural disasters. We need to ensure our most vulnerable community members are being cared for. I worry for so many of our community members and their carers who dare not risk getting Covid and how their lives have completely changed," said Cr Statham, Mayor of Lithgow.

This region is a strong supporter of the "growing our own" health workforce. For example, the JO contributes to scholarships for Charles Sturt University for student doctors and is developing policy collaboratively with our university in support of growing our own. "Support for the Charles Sturt University is essential. We have seen the results of this approach at James Cook in Queensland and we need to work with all levels of government to get similar results here in Central NSW," said Cr Keith, Mayor of Parkes.

Through a collaborative approach the Central NSW Joint Organisation and Rural Doctors Network are currently developing a Memorandum of Understanding to identify and test mechanisms for local government and community engagement and capability in locally based health service and workforce solutions.

"We are looking forward to working with all our key stakeholders to ensure we have engagement from all sectors to build stronger and better-informed networks for challenging situations like when a long serving doctor retires or leaves town " said Cr Medcalf.

The Central NSW Joint Organisation looks forward to working as a cohesive group on better health and social care, it is one the regions agreed top priorities, and the group will continue to advocate co-operatively to benefit the communities of Central NSW.

**ENDS**

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**For media enquiry contact Cr Phyllis Miller Mayor of Forbes and Chair of the Central NS Health Subcommittee on 0419 600 877**