

## **JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Health Roundtable**

#### **Leaders discuss solutions to region's critical GP shortage**

The Northern Eyre Peninsula Health Alliance (NEPHA) proposals to address the critical GP shortage in the region were discussed at a Health Roundtable jointly convened by Regional Development Australia Eyre Peninsula (RDAEP) and the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association (EPLGA) earlier this week.

NEPHA and EPLGA Chair Kimba Mayor Dean Johnson outlined a pilot project to address the GP shortages in the region. The proposals demonstrate that replacing the costly locum services with contracted GPs engaged across the region with ongoing professional development, flexible working conditions, state of the art medical centre facilities and housing will work and be cost effective. The proposal is advocated as a "pilot" for regional health services delivery with funding partners recognised as the Federal and State Government along with the Councils in the region.

RDAEP Chair Bryan Trigg outlined the Eyre Peninsula pipeline of projects valued at over \$14 billion, creating over 25,000 new jobs across the region and the critical need to provide adequate housing, quality healthcare, childcare and education to attract and retain new workers.

Other attendees at the Roundtable were: Lower Eyre Mayor Joanne Quigley (Chair, Cummins Health Forum); Julie Marron (Acting CEO, Eyre & Far North Local Health Network) representing SA Minister for Health; Peta Rutherford (CEO, Rural Doctors Association); Pat Giddings (GP Fellowship Training Program & Remote Vocational Training Scheme) and Matt Williams, head of the Workforce Division of the Federal Government's Department of Health.

SA Senator Karen Grogan, represented Federal Government Health Minister, the Hon. Mark Butler.

Key outcomes of the Roundtable were:

- Recognition of the research underpinning the proposal as being solid with some agreed updates to align with potential funding sources.
- Exploring State Government collaboration through the recently announced Office of Regional Housing and local regional Councils.
- Continued promotion and attraction strategies.
- Continued collaboration by all three spheres of Government.

Senator Grogan will be briefing Minister Butler on the issues and actions discussed and NEPHA, EPLGA and RDAEP will work with members of the Roundtable to adjust aspects of the proposal and further targeted discussions will occur with the Federal and State Governments across various portfolios. NEPHA, EPLGA and RDAEP will continue to work with Senator Grogan as the matter progresses through government decision making processes.

Mayor Dean Johnson said, *"It was terrific to have Senator Grogan represent Minister Butler at the Roundtable. She is no stranger to this region and gave tremendous confidence that she understood our aspirations. She agreed our proposal represented a valuable pilot for other regional communities covering large rural areas and smaller populations. I look forward to continuing to work with her and the State Government to find solutions"*.

Bryan Trigg said, *"Eyre Peninsula is suffering a prolonged health crisis that is acting as a significant barrier to attracting, retaining and supporting the regional workforce needed to drive long-term economic prosperity. We will continue to work with Senator Grogan alongside our local regional partners and the State and Federal governments to trial our regional approach"*.

Senator Grogan said, *"The Northern Eyre is a vibrant community that has been struggling to secure the health services they require but they have put the hard work into coming up with an innovative solution and the research to support it. I look forward to continuing to work with the community and with Minister Butler to further this proposal. I thank Mayor Dean Johnson for his passion, energy and leadership of the Northern Eyre Peninsula Health Alliance"*.

**END**

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