



CENTRAL NSW
COUNCILS

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Approved by: Cr Ken Keith, Chair of Centroc and Mayor of Parkes Shire Council

CENTRAL NSW COUNCILS UNITE TO TACKLE REGIONAL HEALTH WORKFORCE ISSUES

Centroc council members, regional and state health agencies will gather in Parkes next Tuesday 22nd July to discuss the complex issue of unsatisfactory health workforce numbers in regional NSW and ways in which local councils can engage with communities and health organisations to find solutions.

The meeting, to be chaired by Lachlan Shire General Manager Liz Collyer, will include an update on the progress of Centroc's unique Beyond the Range health workforce recruitment program, as well as a presentation from Forbes Shire Council on how they invested in health workforce through education.

"The bottom line is people in regional and remote communities have a shorter life expectancy than their city colleagues," Ms Collyer said. "This is essentially due to an under-supply of health services and workforce and the tyranny of distance. This is an issue of critical importance to our communities."

According to Charles Sturt University, the proportion of rural GP proceduralists has halved from 24% in 2002 to 12% in 2011, and rural and regional communities have access to around 1/6 of the specialists compared to major cities.

"Health workforce is an issue for our region that is not going away," said Centroc Chair Cr Ken Keith. "Although Councils don't traditionally work in the health sphere, the reality is we are the front line of our communities and therefore in an ideal position work on community capacity building initiatives to support growing a regional health workforce."

"We have some wonderful health services and facilities here in Central NSW, we just need to ensure we have a robust regional health workforce to go with them," said Cr Keith.

Organisations attending the meeting will include the Western NSW Local Health District, Western Medicare Local, Charles Sturt University and the NSW Rural Doctor's Network.

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