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MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

Date of Release: 13 April 2015

Approved by: Cr Bill West, Chair of Centroc and Mayor of Cowra Shire Council

Pressure off!

Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network a welcome development

Centroc welcomes a decision from Federal Health Minister Susan Ley this week to increase the number of national Primary Health Networks (PHN) from 30 to 31 with the addition of a Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network, thereby decreasing the vast size of the proposed Western NSW PHN boundary.

The 31 Primary Health Networks will replace the current 61 Medicare Locals across Australia and will begin operating in 1st July.

Late last year, Centroc supported Boorowa Shire Council and Murrumbidgee Medicare Local in calling for the Federal Government to reconsider the boundaries of the proposed Western NSW Primary Health Network, which would have taken up 2/3 of the state of NSW.

“Centroc wrote to the then Minister for Health, Peter Dutton, expressing grave concerns about the vast size of the proposed Western PHN boundary,” said Cr West.

“One of regional NSW’s constant challenges is the tyranny of distance. Health services and workforce are most noticeably disadvantaged by distance. Our concern was that such a large Primary Healthcare Network would be far less effective in connecting communities to critical health services, and will only create larger chasms and problems,” said Cr West.

“We are very pleased the Government has listened to the concerns of the people of regional NSW. By creating the Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network, the Western NSW Primary Health Network, although still very large, will be a more a workable size, and the people in both districts will also be better serviced,” said Cr West.

The Western NSW Primary Health Network will include; Balranald, Bourke, Brewarrina, Broken Hill, Cobar, Condobolin, Coonabarabran, Forbes, Grenfell, Lightning Ridge, Oberon, Orange, Walgett and Wilcannia. The new Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network will now include; Deniliquin, Griffith, Gundagai, Hay, Narrandera, Tumbarumba, Wagga Wagga and Young.

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