

CENTROC

MEDIA RELEASE

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Approved by: Cr Phyllis Miller, Chair of Centroc

Chair of Centroc wants the “local” back in Medicare Local

“Centroc (Central NSW Councils) 17 councils in the Central NSW. We are an area the same size as Tasmania with about half the population and a bigger GDP,” said Cr Phyllis Miller, Chair of Centroc and Mayor of Forbes.

“Central NSW is already a really big area and we are well aware of how challenging it is to deliver services over large distances,” said Cr Miller.

“We have watched the failure of mega- sized health areas like GWAHS fail to deliver services just because of the travel times. It is too hard to deliver and manage community health services over big distances. It is also too hard for communities to work together and have ownership of their health services which is a big part of improving primary health care. Further, the health service needs of Central NSW and the remote far west of NSW are really very different,” said Cr Miller.

“The Federal government health reform program has identified that Medicare Locals are going to deliver community health services. The reform is about primary health care being embedded in communities. It is about building community well-being and resilience. It is about how all the health services outside hospitals will be provided. It needs to be local,” said Cr Miller.

“The current Medicare Local boundary proposed for our communities covers Central NSW, Orana and the Muurdi Paaki area where remote area health programming needs are so different. That’s up to the Queensland border and west to Wilcannia. While in Tasmania, three Medicare Locals are proposed,” said Cr Miller.

“A better local focus for the Medicare Local is needed. A Central West Medicare Local will be able to deliver health services to meet local needs. This request is very reasonable and based on research. Only last year the Australian General Practice Network commissioned a report into suitable boundaries for Medicare Locals and it recommended boundaries similar to those of Centroc. It certainly did not contemplate the current proposal of joining our area with all points to the north west which is just too big to be workable,” said Cr Miller.

I understand that at the Prime Minister’s request, boundaries for Medicare Locals are under review. I call on the Federal Government to put the local back into Medicare Local in Central NSW,” said Cr Miller.

ENDS

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