



SOMERSET REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM

Federal Member for Blair, Shayne Neumann MP and Somerset Regional Council are hosting a regional health workforce forum in Fernvale Futures Centre today, Thursday 24th August.

The Hon Emma McBride Assistant Federal Minister for Mental Health & Suicide Prevention and Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health will attend the Forum. SARRAH is delighted to have the opportunity to meet with the Minister, Mr Neumann and local experts working to improve access to allied health services in regional, rural and remote communities.

The forum focuses on the contribution Allied Health Professionals make to communities, by providing services through the health, aged care, disability service and other systems, impacting people at every stage of life.

Minister McBride will speak to the Australian Government's health reform agenda, including the Strengthening Medicare initiatives designed to improve access to primary health care services when and where people need them.

"These services are as important in the Somerset region as they are in any community. We want to thank Shayne Neumann for taking the initiative of bringing us together on these issues and acknowledge the effort of Minister McBride for coming to the Somerset region to hear about what works well and discuss how to build service access and capacity through the Government's Strengthening Medicare and other reform agendas," said Cath Maloney, SARRAH CEO. "Allied health workforce shortages and service access issues, especially outside of the major cities, have real impacts on people living in the Somerset region. Fortunately, while these have been long-standing concerns mirrored across much of regional, rural and remote Australia, there are very positive signs that governments and many other stakeholders are prepared to embrace reform to better facilitate multi-disciplinary, collaborative and person-centred models of care. The Commonwealth Government has signalled it wants to work collaboratively to reinvigorate the quality of care and service access. These tie in with system productivity gains that should be available if health professionals are enabled to work to their full scopes of practice."

The meeting will also involve local health professionals as well as service provider organisations, including senior representation from the Darling Downs and West Moreton Primary Health Network (PHN). Nationally, the Primary Health Networks have developed an *Allied Health in Primary Care Engagement Framework*, with the central aim of improving collaboration and support for allied health. This will help ensure people are able to access all of the primary health care services they need. The Commonwealth provided additional funding to help PHNs make progress in this area. That investment is a significant and positive step. Together with other initiatives, such as to build the allied health professional workforce needed to deliver services, we're starting to see elements of a much-needed national allied health workforce and service strategy develop.



SARRAH

Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health

Media Release

24 August 2023

“SARRAH has been supported by the Federal government to build a rural generalist pathway and has supported the implementation of the Allied Health Rural Generalist (AHRG) pathway nationally for NGO organisations and private providers in rural and remote communities. The AHRG pathway was originally developed by Queensland Health, and has succeeded in improving the retention rates in many remote communities as well as allowing for brokerage models to develop so that small funding can be pooled to create a sustainable allied health service.” said Cath Maloney. “The model has been gaining traction in the public health systems of other states and territories and there is strong and growing interest among rural and remote allied health service providers nationally.”

SARRAH was formed almost 30 years ago by allied health professionals working across rural and remote Australia, who saw need in the communities they care for and decided to take action to address the need. We still do that. We are an industry leader. Our members know the sector they work in and know the communities they work with. We want to work with the partners who want to get things done.

Please direct interviews and media enquiries to: Catherine Maloney

Chief Executive Officer

Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health

catherine@sarrah.org.au 0423 413 614

SARRAH is the peak body representing rural and remote allied health professionals (AHPs) working in public, private and/or community settings SARRAH advocates on behalf of rural and remote Australian communities. SARRAH maintains that every Australian should have access to health services wherever they live, and the allied health services are fundamental to the well-being of all Australians.

SARRAH represents 27 different allied health professions, including: Audiology; Medical Imaging; Paramedics; Chinese Medicine; Nuclear Medicine; Pharmacy; Chiropractic; Radiation Therapy; Physiotherapy; Dental and Oral Health; Health Promotion; Podiatry; Dentistry; Occupational Therapy; Prosthetics; Dietetics and Nutrition; Optometry; Psychology; Diabetes Education; Orthoptics; Speech Pathology; Exercise Physiology; Orthotics; Social Work; Genetic Counselling; Osteopathy; Sonography

Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health

ABN 92 088 913 517 | T: (02) 6285 4960 | sarrah@sarrah.org.au | www.sarrah.org.au
Unit 4, 17 Napier Close, Deakin, ACT, 2600 | PO Box 74, Deakin West, ACT, 2600