



MEDIA RELEASE

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Council Committed to the future of Huron Valley's Medical Centres

Huron Valley Council remains committed to the operations of the medical centres at Dover and Geeveston.

Acting Mayor Sally Doyle said rumours about Council closing the medical centres were untrue and unfounded.

“What is true is that a shortage of GPs for the medical centres has had a financial impact and the centres are forecast to operate at a deficit in 2022-23, following a forecast deficit for 2021-22.

“What is also true is Council received the resignation of Dr Patrick O’Sullivan who has been working at the Dover Medical Centre for more than five years. He will finish up at the end of 2022. We also farewell Dr Stephen Johanson at the end of July following his contract term with us.

“We understand this is concerning times for our community; however, Council is determined to continue operating the centres and is continuing to work with three interstate recruitment firms, and a Tasmanian one, to help with recruiting GPs to work across both practices.”

The Huron Valley, like many other regional and rural communities, is challenged with the recruitment of permanent GPs who have the level of skills and experience to support communities like Dover and Geeveston, and who are willing to relocate to a rural location with their families.

As a result of vacancies, the centres have had to rely on locum doctors on a regular basis over the past two years.

Communications & Media Officer

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“Locum doctors come at a higher cost that includes accommodation and travel costs covered by Council. However, without their support we recognise we cannot continue to provide this important healthcare service to the community so we are very grateful for their availability.

“We recognise the challenges our doctors and medical centre staff face as we’ve been navigating these difficult times and we will continue to support them as much as we can.”

Acting Mayor Doyle said Council is working with both the State and Federal Governments on the effective delivery of current and future health services in the southern regions of Tasmania, in particular, the far south communities.

“We are supportive of the Tasmanian Government’s Primary Care Reform agenda that aims to make a difference in the way Tasmanians can access healthcare.

“Partnerships are important to delivering sustainable GP services in rural and regional areas and I can assure the community that the conversations we are having are ongoing.”

Acting Mayor Doyle said Council has committed to covering the \$434,000 operating deficit in the 2022-23 Budget.

“In addition, the funding from the State Government towards the \$1.3 million redevelopment of the Dover Medical Centre will enable the provision of modern, fit-for-purpose services to the community, now and into the future. While the redevelopment is still going through the planning process, construction is expected to commence in early 2023.

“There is also the \$300,000 promised by State Government for the construction of the Dover Helipad that we are continuing to support. These investments show an ongoing commitment to health services in the Huon Valley.”

Acting Mayor Doyle said when GPs were retiring at both centres some years ago and the future of both were uncertain, Council made a decision to step up to ensure they didn’t close down and have continued to provide a service since.

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“There are many people in our communities who depend on these services, particularly families and older people. We will continue to do our best to attract permanent GPs to the area so that we have a sustainable position for health services in our community going forward.”

For more information: Acting Mayor Sally Doyle (03) 6264 0300