



The Hon Dr David Gillespie MP
Assistant Minister for Health
Member for Lyne

The Hon Dan Tehan MP
Member for Wannon

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

13 December 2017

Working together to solve GP shortages in Western Victoria

A new health workforce working group has taken the first important steps toward improving access to GPs in western Victorian communities.

Member for Wannon, Dan Tehan said a working group headed by the Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV) and the Western Victoria Primary Health Network (PHN) has been established to address local concerns about GP shortages. The group recently held its first meeting with local stakeholders to understand the scope of the problem.

Mr Tehan said the working group was established to develop and implement strategies to address some of the ongoing health workforce issues in the region.

“Heywood has had no permanent GP services since the start of September. People in the community are relying on a locum while recruitment activities for a permanent GP are finalised,” Mr Tehan said.

“And while there has been locum support and recent recruitment for a GP for Portland, it is challenging to attract new doctors to provide ongoing support for the community.

“Similar issues with attracting, retaining and providing training support for GPs have also been experienced elsewhere in the region,” Mr Tehan added.

Federal Assistant Health Minister, Dr David Gillespie paid tribute to Mr Tehan for his strong advocacy on these local issues, and also thanked RWAV and the Western Victorian PHN for their hard work in setting up the new working group.

“Dan Tehan has continued to brief me and my department on many of the health workforce challenges being experienced in parts of his electorate, and I congratulate him on helping to develop some practical solutions to these issues. I’m confident that initiatives like this will result in better access to GP services for people all across rural Victoria,” Minister Gillespie said.

At the working group meeting, difficulties in accessing potential GP trainees, supervision shortages across clinics, and streamlined pathways for GP recruitment and retention were all discussed. Local primary health stakeholders spoke of their experiences and identified the priorities that the working group will take forward.

In terms of the next steps, the working group will team up with local health providers over the coming months. Identifying local placement opportunities at local health clinics, providing clear

documentation on training pathways to GP fellowship and actively recruiting a new GP for Portland will all be considered.

The working group's next meeting is in February 2018.

For more information:

Dan Tehan's Office - (03) 5561 6405

Minister Gillespie's Office - (02) 6277 4960