

Media Release:

-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

8 APRIL 2022

TEMPORARY HOLD ON SURGERY – COOTAMUNDRA

Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) recently advised that Cootamundra Hospital would temporarily suspend non-urgent elective surgery for patients for a period of eight weeks starting from Monday 11 April 2022.

Senior managers from MLHD met with the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council Mayor Charlie Sheahan and Local Health Advisory Committee Chair Logan Collins to discuss these changes. Both were supportive of the suspension of services as a necessary measure to support the wellbeing of the staff while allowing for new staff to be trained, upskilled, and supported. Senior managers from MLHD also met with Staff and local GPs regarding the changes.

Regional Australia is experiencing significant workforce shortages and MLHD is no exception. In addition to a high number of vacancies further pressures to staffing are now occurring due to furloughed staff and unplanned leave caused by rising levels of COVID-19 transmission in the community.

MLHD reassures the community these steps are temporary and that the district will resume normal services at Cootamundra Hospital in approximately 8 weeks.

Mayor Charlie Sheahan says Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council was supportive of the move to ensure safety of services for acute patients presenting to the Hospital.

“I have been speaking with Minister Bronnie Taylor today and she has given her assurance that this measure is a temporary solution to what is a state-wide and indeed national crisis impacting us so close to home.”

Chair of the Cootamundra Local Health Advisory Committee Logan Collins said the temporary closure was essential to ensure acute and emergency services could continue at the hospital over the coming weeks.

“We have been kept up to date with the workforce challenges by MLHD, and we understand the difficulties with staffing pressures due to furloughed staff and unplanned leave caused by rising levels of COVID-19 transmission in the community,” said Councillor Collins.

“We are supportive of this move as an interim measure,” he added.

Patients impacted by these changes will be contacted to discuss alternative arrangements for their surgery. If required, financial assistance and support can be offered with transport and accommodation.

We thank the community for their understanding and support towards our nursing workforce.

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