



## High Demand on Doctors in Rural Areas

Medical clinics in Kerang are under high demand with an increased need for medical appointments right across our district.

“We absolutely hate the idea of not being able to give somebody an appointment when they want it.” Northern District Community Health (NDCH) CEO Mandy Hutchinson said. “We can make appointments and we can take new patients. It might not be as quickly as someone might like, but our staff will always do what they can to get someone seen as soon as possible.”

Kerang District Health (KDH) CEO Robert Jarman said, “Winter always sees a higher demand on GP clinics and our professional teams are trained to manage that need to the best of their abilities.”

“We totally appreciate it is stressful when you or someone you love is unwell,” Ms Hutchinson said.

Unfortunately there is a shortage of GP’s across rural Australia and both NDCH and KDH have been actively working to overcome this issue. NDCHS have taken the campaign to a national level with a “We Want a GP” video. Both NDCH and KDH have led and been actively involved in the Murray Medical Workforce, which is well supported by other health services, peak bodies and state and federal representatives, and there are promising projects emerging, but change takes time. Ms Hutchinson and Mr Jarman agreed that if there was anything either agency could do to get more doctors to Kerang they would do it. “In the meantime, we appreciate everyone’s patience and understanding.”

Here is some information that may assist the community:

- In an emergency always call 000.
- The Urgent Care Centre at Kerang District Health is available for people requiring urgent care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Funded Emergency Departments are located in Swan Hill, Echuca and Bendigo Hospital’s.
- Murray Primary Health Network (PHN) have an after-hours medical advice line for people living in country areas. You can call the **healthdirect GP advice and support line** on 1800 022 222.
- Nurse on Call can also be contacted 24 hours a day on 1300 60 60 24.

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**Media contacts:** Mandy Hutchinson 5451 0200 Robert Jarman 5450 9200