

Media release

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Health crisis looms for Yackandandah

There are grave concerns about the future of healthcare in Yackandandah, as news of a potential sale of the health service has caused uproar in the community.

Local GP Dr Tess Goodwin said that GPs practising with Yackandandah Health were already planning on leaving the service if the sale goes ahead.

“We have serious concerns about the entity that has been lined up to purchase the health service and have already received a resignation from one of our GPs, who has already said she would be keen to work with us again if an alternative, suitable purchaser can be found,” Dr Goodwin said.



“Decisions have been made by the Board of Management of Yackandandah Health with short notice, without due consultation with the community or the staff providing care, or with adequate consideration of the impact this decision may have on the availability of health care in our community into the future.

“We have an excellent GP practice here with five highly qualified Rural Generalist doctors providing comprehensive care to Yackandandah. This is increasingly rare in many rural communities.

“We are urging the management committee, our local member Helen Haines MP, and the Minister for Aged Care The Hon Anika Wells MP, to continue to seek an extension of the Commonwealth funding that is currently supporting Yackandandah Health, to enable sufficient community consultation and an open and transparent tender process that takes into account the ability of the health service to continue to meet community needs.

“The Yackandandah Bush Nursing Hospital was opened in 1926,” Dr Goodwin said, “and Yack residents have been cared for in this community for the past 97 years. We want options available for us to ensure that we can continue to care for our patients for at least 100 more.”



President of the Rural Doctors Association of Victoria (RDAV), Dr Dan Wilson, said that the organisation was deeply concerned about the situation in Yackandandah.

“Readily accessible health care, particularly high quality specialist general practice and primary care must be maintained wherever possible,” Dr Wilson said.

“Organisations such as Yackandandah Health must consider their social responsibility alongside their fiscal responsibility when making decisions of this kind.

“It is clear that the current course recommended by the Board could result in significant disruption to service delivery in the community, including potential loss of general practitioners, which would be devastating for both the aged care facility and the broader community.

“We urge Yackandandah Health to explore all alternative options that would enable consideration of the needs of the GP workforce and allow them to continue to provide care within the community as they are so keen to do.”

Yackandandah Health currently operates an aged care facility, a GP practice and a childcare centre.

Dr Goodwin recently spoke at length to the late Pam Crosthwaite, former long-term Director of Nursing at the facility, about the strong community ties to Yackandandah Health.

“The Yack community has helped support the health service for decades out of their own pocket,” Dr Goodwin said.

"Pam told me of the 50 community members who donated \$1000 per year for 3 years in the early 2000s, staff – including Pam – donating of up to 9% of their wages, and the generous sale/partial donation of neighbouring land by one of the aged care residents to expand the facility. The new apartment buildings are now situated on that land.

“Many of our community are very upset about the confidential sale of their asset and are joining us in urging the Commonwealth to extend the funding available for the service to allow the community to be openly and honestly engaged in determining its future.”

[Download an image of Dr Tess Goodwin](#)

[Download an image of Dr Dan Wilson](#)

Available for interview:

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