

# MEDIA RELEASE

## New primary care clinic opens in Rochester

21 March 2025

People who live in Rochester but don't have a GP can now access care locally at the Rochester Outreach Clinic, located at 14 Village Drive, open Monday to Friday during business hours.

Identifying that the community needed increased primary healthcare services, Murray PHN applied, and was successful for, a General Practice Incentive Fund grant from the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.

The funding is helping to develop sustainable primary care services for rural towns where a private general practice has closed. To address this critical service gap, Murray PHN is working collaboratively with health services and a broad range of community stakeholders to increase service access through collaborative planning and design.

Murray PHN CEO Matt Jones said that many rural general practice clinics faced challenges in trying to stay open.

"We know that smaller communities tend to have potentially less access to healthcare, but greater health needs compared with other areas.

"Many towns have to rely heavily on a small number of healthcare practitioners and services for their significant health needs. Subsequently, the demands and burden carried by a critical and small number of providers contributes to the fragility of service continuation due to clinician and staff isolation and burnout.

"To support the health workforce and to support the community, new collaborative models of primary healthcare such as this are needed," Matt said.

The Rochester Outreach Clinic is being operated by the partners involved in the project, including Murray PHN, Rochester and Elmore District Health Service, Swan Hill District Health, and the Rural Workforce Agency Victoria. The clinical staff are being provided by Swan Hill District Health who are experiencing similar challenges to Rochester, but who are being supported through the project to grow their capacity to support rural communities across the region.

Executive Director of Medical Services at Swan Hill District Health, Associate Professor Rex Prabhu, said that teamwork and collaboration has resulted in Rochester locals now having improved access to primary care, which can also ease the workload on the valued GPs at working in Rochester and surrounds including Campaspe Medical Centre and Elmore Primary Health Services.

"A shared commitment to patient care has enabled us to successfully launch an outreach primary care clinic to the Rochester community, who were in urgent need of additional GP services.

"It is a remarkable, multi-organisation achievement that is testament to what can be accomplished when organisations unite with a shared vision and pool resources and capacity," Rex said.

People wanting to make an appointment at the Rochester Outreach Clinic can **call 03 5032 8490** – noting that this is a temporary phone number, or book online via HotDocs:

<https://www.hotdoc.com.au/medical-centres/rochester-VIC-3561/rochester-outreach-clinic/doctors>



Leadership



Collaboration



Respect



Accountability



Innovation

GP, nurses and allied health professionals interested in working in the region are encouraged to register their interest through the Rural Workforce Agency Victoria: <https://www.rwav.com.au/register-for-interest/> and Connecting the Docs <https://connectingthedocs.au/>

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### **About us:**

Murray PHN is one of 29 PHNs (Primary Health Networks) around Australia working to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of primary health care and service systems. Across our region, we work with general practitioners (GPs), community health, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs), pharmacy, aged care and allied health practitioners, and with acute services such as hospitals, specialists and emergency care.

The role of PHNs is to help to support and integrate the work of these important services to ensure that the people get the right care, in the right place, at the right time. In the Murray PHN region, which covers almost 100,000 sq km of regional Victoria, we work to develop and maintain sustainable models of primary health care for our communities.

### **Contact details**

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### **Image of Rochester Outreach Clinic (Pictured left to right: Ash Graham, Jackie Plunkett, Dr Ellie Bowdich, and Dr Rex Prabhu.)**

- <https://murrayphn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Rochester-Outreach-Clinic.jpg>

### **Images of Matt Jones**

- [https://www.murrayphn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Murray-PHN-CEO\\_Matt-Jones\\_2024.jpg](https://www.murrayphn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Murray-PHN-CEO_Matt-Jones_2024.jpg)
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