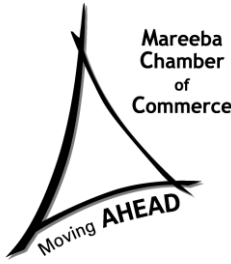


Mareeba Chamber of Commerce Media Release



For immediate release

Mareeba secures funding for health services feasibility plan

The Mareeba Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with Mareeba Hospital Group, has secured funding to carry out a feasibility plan into expanding primary health care services in the Mareeba region.

The \$300,000 in funding is a win for the local community who have long lobbied for the maintenance and improvement of primary health care services to the Mareeba community.

Ross Cardillo, chair of the Chamber's steering committee on improved health services for Mareeba Shire, said the Mareeba community had galvanised in lobbying against the reduction – and at times loss - of services at the Mareeba Hospital in recent years.

“While this funding is focused on improving primary health care services and there has been an increase in services at Mareeba Hospital thanks to continued communication between our Mareeba Hospital Group and the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service, we believe that more can still be done to encourage more doctors and allied health workers to our area,” Mr Cardillo said.

“The Mareeba community has long supported this cause, resulting in more than 1000 people turning out to a public meeting in Mareeba in 2017.

“While the funding is great news for our primary health care services, more needs to be done to ensure services continue to be upgraded at the Mareeba Hospital.”

Mareeba Chamber of Commerce president Joe Moro said the community needed to continue to be vigilant to ensure the health services being delivered in Mareeba met the needs of the community now, and in the future.

He said the funding aligned well with the chamber's current project, the COVID-19 Community Taskforce, which was planning for Mareeba's recovery from the pandemic, with health one of the key focus areas.

“This is an opportunity for our community to attract more doctors and allied health professionals to Mareeba,” Mr Moro said.

Mr Cardillo said the community was pleased surgery was now being offered at the Mareeba Hospital, however, the Mareeba community is still yet to see dialysis services made available at the hospital.

A new CT scanner is in the process of being installed and should be operational in a few months.

Mr Cardillo said the Chamber would auspice the funding.

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“The support of the chamber has enabled us to work with the Northern Queensland Primary Health Network to secure the funding,” Mr Cardillo said.

“We have had a number of meetings with Louise Livingstone, health planning and evaluation contractor to the project, to put our proposal to NQPHN and we have confidence in her ability to deliver the desired outcomes.

“We have had discussions with the Central Highlands Community Clinic Board and representatives to learn more about how they have made a community model for primary health care work successfully in Emerald.”

Mr Cardillo thanked Dr Grant and Merrill Manypenny for their support.

Ends...