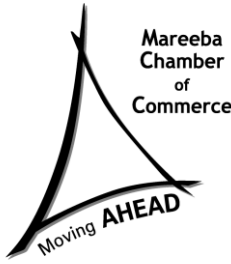


Mareeba Chamber of Commerce Media Release



For immediate release

Momentum builds to develop community-owned health care service in Mareeba

The Mareeba community recently heard from the head of a Queensland community-owned healthcare service as local momentum continues to build for a Mareeba-based service.

Paul Bell, chair of the Central Highlands Healthcare, visited Mareeba to speak with the Mareeba Chamber of Commerce and other community stakeholders about the model used in Emerald.

His visit comes as work continues on a developing a sustainable model of comprehensive primary healthcare for the community of Mareeba and surrounding areas.

The project is being driven by the Mareeba health action group under the auspice of the Mareeba Chamber of Commerce, which secured funding from the Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) to carry out the project.

It is in response to an initiative by the NQPHN to identify opportunities to deliver sustainable improvement in health outcomes for the Mareeba community.

Chamber president Joe Moro said Mr Bell's visit was a great opportunity to learn about the success and challenges of a community-owned healthcare service.

"Our prime focus is to find a feasible service model that can be implemented to suit the needs of the community in Mareeba and surrounding areas," Mr Moro said.

"A critical part of that journey is ensuring that we engage with the community so they have a sense of ownership over the design and delivery of health services in the Mareeba.

"While there is still a significant way to go, the Chamber is pleased with the progress to date and looks forward to continuing to work with the health group, and NQPHN to realise the health group's vision."

Steering committee chair Ross Cardillo said the goal of the Mareeba health action group was to achieve meaningful and sustained improvement in access to local health care services using a social enterprise model that is 100 per cent community owned.

"The Mareeba community has fought long and hard to ensure our primary healthcare services are maintained and improved," Mr Cardillo said.

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“We are proposing a sustainable model to enhance the primary health care experience for individuals and families by encouraging patient-centred, coordinated care, where individuals are empowered to have an active role in their healthcare.”

Caption:

Joe Moro (Chamber president), Nipper Brown (steering committee), Mary Graham (MSC councillor), Betty Dickenson, Paul Bell (Central Highlands Healthcare) and Ross Cardillo (steering committee).