

## **MAYORAL MINUTE**

### **MM-1 MAYORAL MINUTE – REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS ADVOCACY**

#### **Summary:**

The Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) will hold its Annual Public Meeting on Thursday 20 November 2025 and is inviting questions from the community. Given the timing of this meeting, I have been requested by several councillors to present this Mayoral Minute for Council's consideration.

#### **Recommendation**

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That Council:

- a write to the Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD):
  - i Outlining support for the work the Reproductive Rights Forum;
  - ii Reaffirming Council's position on increasing abortion services in Wagga in accordance with the adopted Advocacy Plan;
- b submit the questions provided in the body of the report to the MLHD Annual Meeting

#### **Report**

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The Murrumbidgee Local Health District is holding their Annual Public Meeting at 1pm on Thursday 20 November 2025 and are inviting questions from the community. This forum provides Council an opportunity to raise items from our adopted Advocacy Plan, in particular “**Abortion Services:** *We request that the State and Federal Governments, local health district, hospital staff, GPs and other organisations increase access to medical and surgical abortions*”.

Earlier this year a public Reproductive Rights Forum was held in Wagga Wagga which identified the need for greater services in our local health district. A second public Forum was held last month which reaffirmed this need, and formed a sub-committee focused on action on behalf of the community with the aim of achieving improved reproductive health services in Wagga.

The Reproductive Health Forum will be submitting the following questions to the MLHD Annual Public Meeting:

#### **Reporting**

How is the MLHD tracking and addressing reproductive health needs in our region?

#### **Service Access and Equity**

Community members and clinicians report that women are being referred to Orange Hospital for essential reproductive health procedures.

- Can MLHD explain why women in Wagga and the wider Riverina are being sent out of our region for basic reproductive health care?
- What is being done to ensure equitable, local access to these services?

- What is the number of Dilation and Curettage procedures provided as a percent of all gynaecological surgical interventions?
  - How many elective or non-elective D&Cs the Wagga Base hospital
  - How many referrals for D&C were there outside the MLHD?
  - How many requests for D&Cs were denied?
- How many hours of service have been provided in the reporting year for each of the Wagga Base Hospital's outpatient clinics, including but not limited to:
  - Cardiology
  - Respiratory
  - Orthopaedics
  - Renal
  - Women's health
  - Mental Health
  - Rheumatology
  - Pain

### **Regional Disadvantage**

Wagga is a major regional centre, yet women here and in surrounding towns have no local access to comprehensive reproductive health services.

- How does MLHD justify this gap given its role in coordinating primary health care and addressing service inequities?
- What advocacy or partnership work is MPHNSW doing with NSW Health or private providers to restore or expand reproductive care options locally?

### **Primary Prevention and Women's Health Strategy**

There is strong evidence linking access to reproductive health services with improved mental health, reduced family violence risk, and better long-term outcomes for women and children.

- How is MLHD integrating reproductive health into its broader women's health and primary prevention priorities?

### **Accountability and Community Voice**

Given the lack of transparency and the ongoing impact on women in the Murrumbidgee:

- Will MLHD commit to providing surgical terminations in Wagga?
- Will MLHD commit to consulting with community groups, including the Reproductive Rights Forum, to co-design a regional reproductive health plan?

### **Financial Implications**

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N/A

### **Policy and Legislation**

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Wagga Wagga City Council Code of Meeting Practice

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## **Link to Strategic Plan**

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### **Vibrant**

A healthy community

Work with the health sector, government and community to improve access to health services.