

## Media Release

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### ***Moura must come first in hospital plans***

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REPORTS that Moura Hospital in Central Queensland is at risk of closing is of serious concern to all rural Queenslanders reliant on small hospitals for their medical care, according to Rural Doctors Association of Queensland president Dr Adam Coltzau.

Dr Coltzau said the Central Queensland Health and Hospital Service, which administers public health care in the district, should consult widely with the community, local government and Health Minister Lawrence Springborg's office before any decision is taken on the hospital's future.

Dr Coltzau said closing Moura Hospital would significantly reduce emergency and procedural services available to local residents in a town of 3000 people that was expected to double over the next decade on the back of energy sector growth.

"If a township the size of Moura is vulnerable to having services withdrawn we hold that no small hospital in Queensland is safe," Dr Coltzau said.

"This is a significant township with a large permanent resident and mining population. Where are these people accessing services if not locally? The need for this service is clear, community support is resolute and should the HHS decide to close the service against all clinical rationale, the decision would be entirely economic."

Dr Coltzau said the action of the CQ HHS had so far proved disappointing, casting doubts over the Board's intentions to genuinely engage the community in its plans.

"On receiving reports of the intended closure, we made ourselves available to be briefed by the CQ HHS Board, their Executive would not confirm or deny plans of a closure, only confirming on Monday evening that they had planned to meet with staff at Moura on [Wednesday](#) morning," Dr Coltzau said.

"Local media reports have continued to foreshadow an announcement of closures or reduced services and just this morning media are reporting that the Board's chairman Charles Ware has announced that meeting with staff will be deferred by one week.

"We remain concerned that the proposed consultation will be brief, it appears the Board has already reached a decision, and only reconsidered announcing it once community pressure was mounted."

"This community is behind their health service. They have raised funds to fit out the hospital and the medical centre, and the community themselves purchased a house for use by a second doctor. They have a very high stake in the future of their health service and the HHS have neglected opportunities to consult and engage the community and clinicians in real planning for the future."

"It is a basic right for rural Queenslanders to have access to emergency hospital services and acute in-patient and palliative care locally. It would be no surprise to us, if Moura were a test case for other small rural hospital closures. Unless the Minister acts to ensure local service provision within some reasonable parameters, these independent boards will strip small community hospitals one by one.

"We are urging the CQ HHS to re-think its position. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these matters with Mr Ware and his Board, and RDAQ stands ready to assist in any way possible to ensure first class medical services are restored across rural Queensland."

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*Supporting Rural Doctors and Rural Communities*