GOYDER
South Australia's Heartland

Ref: 10.3.2.2

23 September 2021

Attn: Belinda Caruana
Senior Policy Officer LGASA
c/- and
community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

To whom it may concern,

RE: FEDERAL PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO PRIMARY HEALTH SERVICES FOR REGIONAL AUSTRALIANS.

Thank you for providing Council with the opportunity to provide feedback on the Federal Parliamentary Inquiry into Primary Health Services for Regional Australians.

Council agrees that regional and rural areas, specifically those townships with less than 5,000 residents are disadvantaged in terms of social and economic wellbeing, with limited access to some of the most basic of primary health care services.

Approximately 20% of Australia's population is dispersed throughout regional and rural Australia in communities of fewer than 5,000 residents, factually, these communities have higher hospitalisation rates and higher risk factors. Notwithstanding the many initiatives over numerous years, the rural and remote health needs of Australians are still not being met.

The ageing society associated with the 'baby boomer' generation, particularly in rural and regional Australia has resulted in an increase and greater use and need of health services.

Council is of the strong belief that not all regional townships require immediate access to equitable, efficient and sustainable services. But, that core services at appropriate levels must be placed in larger regional townships to sustain the smaller townships within the immediate surrounds and specifically for those townships with less than 5,000 residents.

Distance and lack of transport are major impediments and evolving technology may facilitate improved access however; given the priority to maximise availability such tools should be part of a broader strategy and not used as a substitute.

Council supports a whole of system approach to improving rural and remote health outcomes including a national strategy that includes outcomes and targets to guide regional health system development, new policy framework and a plan.

These services should be accessible to all Australians regardless of where they reside and addressing this disparity is an immediate priority that requires a national response.

Regional Council of Goyder | 1 Market Square, Burra SA 5417
ABN 44 460 359 537 | **T** (08) 8892 0100 | **F** (08) 8892 2467 | **E** council@goyder.sa.gov.au | **www.goyder.sa.gov.au**

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Yours sincerely,

David J. Stevenson
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER