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## **Rural GP and AGPN Chair appointed leader of Primary Health Care Strategy**

Today Minister for Health and Ageing the Hon Nicola Roxon appointed Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) and rural GP Dr Tony Hobbs as chair of the primary health care External Reference Group.

Primary health care is “the principal vehicle for the delivery of health care at the most local level of a country's health system,” – World Health Organization.

Dr Hobbs a general practitioner based in Cootamundra 400km south west of Sydney said he was delighted to be appointed as Chair of the External Reference Group.

“This Group will advise the Government on a primary health care strategy that will improve access to affordable, sustainable and quality primary health services for all Australians regardless of where they live or what they earn.

“There are significant challenges facing Australia’s primary health care system. We have an ageing population, an increasing burden of chronic disease and due to workforce shortages many Australians face delays in accessing appropriate care in their local community, for example seeing their GP.

“For too long primary health care has taken a back seat due to the state of our hospital system. I commend the Prime Minister and the Minister for acknowledging the importance primary care plays in the health system,” Dr Hobbs said.

Dr Hobbs has a diverse medical career. He has worked in a number of Indigenous Australian communities and whilst based in the Gulf of Carpentaria, Dr Hobbs helped establish a remote community health service focusing on preventative health care and primary care for the local community.

He spent a number of years in Swaziland. In addition to his general practitioner qualifications he has also trained in obstetrics, community child health care and tropical medicine.

“Rather than focus solely on public hospitals having a primary care strategy will attempt take the pressure off public hospitals and improve support and care in the community for the future of our nation,” Dr Hobbs said.

For media interviews please call AGPN Communications Manager Kathryn Conroy on 0416 428 678