



18 JUL, 2020

Broken Hill 'well-prepared' thanks to respiratory clinics

Barrier Daily Truth, Broken Hill

Page 1 of 2

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Federal Member for Parkes and Minister for Regional Health Mark Coulton said two respiratory clinics in Broken Hill stand the city in good stead to combat COVID-19.

Mr Coulton this week visited the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Broken Hill base, which is operating one of the clinics, funded by the Federal Government.

"This clinic has been set up to help screen patients in the Broken Hill community with COVID-19-like symptoms," Mr Coulton said.

"While we have done exceptionally well in the Parkes electorate in limiting the spread of the virus, it's clear that the risk of COVID-19 returning to our region still remains.

"It's imperative we each continue our stringent social distancing and hygiene practices and that we download the COVIDSafe app.

"We must do all that we can to protect communities such as Broken Hill and ensure that we are well-prepared for any future local outbreaks.

"These clinics are an important development for the Far West as we continue to strengthen our local capacity in response to the COVID-19 pandemic."

The Federal Government is establishing more than 130 GP-led respiratory clinics

across Australia to assess patients with mild to moderate COVID-19 symptoms. More than half of these clinics are in regional areas.

"These respiratory clinics are best placed to support people with a fever, cough, sore throat and other respiratory symptoms and will help to avoid the risk of infection in our local communities," he said.

"The Federal Government has been working with local GPs and Aspen Medical - which has significant health

emergency management experience in Australia and overseas - to roll out the Broken Hill clinic."

Mr Coulton said patients would need to make an appointment either online or over the phone before visiting.

Western NSW Primary Health Care (WNSWPHN) CEO Andrew Harvey said the clinics complement an enormous amount of work already undertaken by GPs and clinicians across hospital and primary health care networks.

"These respiratory clinics provide additional capacity in Broken Hill to support early detection and reinforce services, and I'm very grateful for the support of the RFDS and Maari Ma Health in helping to set up these important additions to our COVID-19 infrastructure," Mr Harvey said.

"So far we have had 47 recorded COVID-19 cases across the PHN area, which covers more than half of the state, and no new detected cases in some weeks, which is testament to the preparedness of our region in meeting this global pandemic head-on."

General Manager of Base Operations and Service Delivery, RFDS South Eastern Section, Claudio Grasso said the clinic will provide new local opportunities.

"The respiratory clinic will open up new doors for us to support the health-care of the Broken Hill community," Mr Grasso said.

"We thank the Federal Government for this opportunity - we care deeply about our community and the clinic will put us in a strong position to protect Broken Hill against the potential spread of COVID-19."

Patients can make a booking by phoning the Clive Bishop Medical Centre on 08 8080 3780. The opening hours for the clinic are 9am - 1pm Mondays and Fridays, and 1pm - 5pm Wednesdays.



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Page 2 of 2

A second Federal Government-funded respiratory clinic in Broken Hill is operational at Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation, located at 428 Argent Street.