

MEDIA RELEASE – 11 July 2023

Glamorgan Spring Bay Council awards contract to not-for-profit cohealth to operate medical practices

Glamorgan Spring Bay Council is pleased to announce cohealth as the preferred tenderer to manage its medical practices in Triabunna and Bicheno (East Coast Health and Bicheno General Practice). The competitive tender and independent assessment process will now progress to the three plus two year contract. cohealth is a leading not-for-profit community health agency.

Glamorgan Spring Bay Council Mayor, Cheryl Arrol, said, "Council is committed to improving health outcomes for residents, and we are excited to welcome the nationally renowned health agency, cohealth, to our community."

"We're aware that General Practitioner (GP) accessibility and the health system in Tasmania has not been meeting everyone's needs equally and we know that people simply want to be able to access the health services and clinicians they need, when they need them," she said.

"cohealth has extensive expertise in managing medical practices and primary health services and works from a model of team-based care. The tender process revealed cohealth as an experienced pair of hands to operate the two medical practices.

"cohealth is an organisation that is passionate about achieving health equity in areas which experience financial or geographic barriers to health care."

"We see great alignment between the values of our community and those of cohealth," said Mayor Arrol.

cohealth currently operates primary health services across 30 sites in Victoria and specialises in the community health model, which involves team-based, multidisciplinary healthcare that brings GPs, allied health, nurses, dental, mental health and alcohol and drug support together to address the spectrum of people's needs.

The community health model is aligned with the Federal Government's primary healthcare reforms and the recommendations of the recent Strengthening Medicare Taskforce which include a move to more team-based care.

cohealth Chief Executive, Nicole Bartholomeusz, says the organisation is passionate about creating healthy communities and excited to be joining the Glamorgan Spring Bay community. "This is a vibrant and unique community and we're looking forward to helping people live happier and healthier lives," said Ms Bartholomeusz.

"The cohealth approach looks at the whole community and the interconnections between people's mental and physical health, their social connections and environmental circumstances."

cohealth says it has already started to develop a deep understanding of the health issues facing the Tasmanian East Coast community, after having been awarded a two-year Federal Primary Care Rural Innovative Multidisciplinary Models (PRIMM) grant which provides funding to help rural and remote communities design health care that will work for them.

“Our philosophy is ‘care for all’ and we believe everyone has the right to timely and accessible health services, regardless of where they live or their income.”

As a not-for-profit organisation, cohealth has a strong commitment to delivering services at little or no cost for people who are on low incomes, and investing any revenue generated from fees back into local services.

“The Triabunna and Bicheno medical centre teams are highly skilled and committed, delivering great care every day, and they are a vital asset to the ongoing operation. It’s important that we maintain continuity of care for patients by retaining excellent staff,” said Ms Bartholomeusz.

“We look forward to working with clinic staff and the community to deliver a wider range of health services and programs over time.

Follow up media enquires:

co-health Lanie.Harris@cohealth.org.au or 0418 552 377

Glamorgan Spring Bay Council

Cheryl.arnol@freycinet.tas.gov.au or 0419 533 615

About Glamorgan Spring Bay Council

Glamorgan Spring Bay has a population of over 5,000 people and is bounded by the Denison River in the north and the start of Bust Me Gall Hill 160 kilometres to the south. The main townships are Bicheno, Coles Bay, Swansea, Triabunna and Orford. According to the 2021 Census, 79 per cent of GSB’s community members were born in Australia and 4 per cent identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

About the tender process

The Glamorgan Spring Bay Council currently owns and operates two health care Practices in the Glamorgan Spring Bay; East Coast Health at Triabunna and Bicheno General Practice at Bicheno. In May 2023 Council announced it was seeking Expressions of Interest from a Service Provider to enter arrangements with Council to operate the two medical practices.

An independent review committee ensured a transparent and competitive procurement process.

About cohealth: cohealth is a not-for-profit community health organisation that provides low-cost and free local health and support services including medical, dental, allied health, mental health, aged care and counselling, and many specialist health services across Melbourne’s CBD, northern and western suburbs.