



13 OCT, 2021

## A new \$660,000 'home'

Goondiwindi Argus, Goondiwindi

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# A new \$660,000 'home'

A NEW \$660,000 student accommodation facility at the Goondiwindi Hospital is ensuring the town remains a medical hub for the border region.

Rural Medical Education Australia (Rural Med Ed) and Darling Downs Health opened the facility on Friday.

Along with the eight ensuite-bedrooms, it features a common room and kitchen, and all spaces are linked by a large, covered deck.

Rural Med Ed CEO Megan O'Shannessy said the new accommodation "enables students to have a wonderful rural placement experience".

"Students have previously been housed in rental houses in Goondiwindi, but this new purpose-built accommodation allows them to immerse themselves in the hospital community and supports their studying and training. It is also a fantastic opportunity to promote the Goondiwindi region to future health care workers," she said.

A view supported by the Goondiwindi Regional Council Mayor, Cr Lawrence Springborg AM. "If we can train people in our

local community they are far more likely to work and reside here." Cr Springborg AM said he spoke to "dozens" of students and health workers, "principally young people", who, over the past few month, visited Goondiwindi to assist at vaccination clinics.

"They were so enthusiastic about this community," he said. And the possibility of coming back to be a part of it. The new student home will only add to Goondiwindi's attraction, he said.

Cr Springborg AM said residents' pride in their community was one of the region's biggest selling points.

An indication of that spirit is vaccination rates. "We are the most vaccinated community in Queensland (85 percent have received their first jab, 75percent their second).

The Queensland average for first injection is presently 68percent and only 50 percent for the second).

The accommodation will also be available to Darling Downs Health as well as midwifery, allied health and nursing students from University of Southern Queensland and Southern Queensland Rural Health.

Darling Downs Health Board member Dr Ross Hetherington said that the accommodation facility will be a valuable addition to the hospital and the community.

"We want future health professionals to have the best possible experience and one way we can do that is to make it feel like home.

"We hope that when it comes to looking at a career path, they choose to stay in our rural facilities and help strengthen the health workforce into the future."



Home-away-from-home.



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The plaque was unveiled by Cr Lawrence Springborg, Marie Pietsch (Darling Downs Health Board), Megan OShannessy (Rural Med Ed CEO) and Dr Ross Hetherington.