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MEDIA RELEASE:

COUNTRY HEALTH SA MISLED COMMUNITY

A leaked letter reveals that plans to end obstetric services at the Millicent Hospital were in place as early as May this year despite more recent assurances to the community that such cuts would not occur.

Wattle Range Mayor Peter Gandolfi said the leaked letter proves that the Millicent community has been misled.

“The community was led to believe that services at the hospital would not be cut and statements as such were made on numerous occasions in June yet this leaked letter shows the decision to cut obstetrics was made following correspondence and a meeting with the AMA dating back to May 31,” said Mr Gandolfi.

Dated June 12, the leaked letter is signed by Acting Country Health SA Chief Executive Officer Dr Peter Chapman in which he tells the AMA (SA) that: **“Due to local workforce shortages, obstetric services will in future be offered from Mount Gambier District Health Services.” – letter attached**

Mayor Gandolfi said despite the stance outlined in the leaked letter, the community continued to receive assurances that nothing was changing at the Millicent Hospital.

At Wattle Range Council’s meeting on June 11 the Regional Director of Country Health SA said: **“There is no plan to let services diminish in Millicent (Hospital).”**

In the SE Times June 24, a Country Health spokesperson said: **“Women with low risk births continue to birth at Millicent [while] women with high risk births continue to birth at Mount Gambier Hospital.”**

Country Health SA released a statement on Tuesday night making public the plans, as outlined in the leaked letter, to close the obstetric unit at the Millicent hospital.

Mr Gandolfi said Country Health SA has severely breached the community’s trust.

“The Millicent Medical Clinic has been providing obstetric services for many years and the clinic has offered to continue the service.

“The clinic has a flexible arrangement in providing low risk obstetric services but under the current contract offer by Country Health SA this service will end.”

For further information in relation to this press release, please contact Mayor Gandolfi on 0419 155 447

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