



# Media Statement

---

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**3 February 2026**

### **Supporting the Backbone of Regional Care: Health Professionals Network Welcomes Rural Clinicians at 2026 Welcome Event in Pilbara**

Health professionals living and working in the Pilbara are being invited to come together, make connections and feel part of the local community at the upcoming Health Professionals Network (HPN) *Welcome to 2026* events.

The events provide an informal community-focused gathering, designed to help support the region's health workforce, where building relationships can be just as important as clinical work.

Hosted by the Pilbara Health Professionals Network, the *Welcome to 2026* events are expected to attract more than 45 local health professionals and their families.

The events play an important role in helping regional health professionals - particularly those new to the region - feel connected and supported, reducing professional and social isolation and encouraging long-term workforce retention in regional Western Australia.

"Moving to a regional area can be incredibly rewarding, but it can also be isolating," Leesa Thomas, General Manager Education and Engagement, Rural Health West said.

"These events help people put faces to names, build friendships and feel part of the local community, and strong local networks are essential for strong regional healthcare."

### **Strengthening Healthcare Through Connection**

Health Professionals Networks (HPNs) operate across seven regions in Western Australia, including the Goldfields, Great Southern, Kimberley, Midwest Gascoyne, Pilbara, South West and the Wheatbelt. Collectively, the networks support more than 5,200 health professionals across WA and continue to grow each year.

In the 2024–2025 financial year, HPNs delivered 95 events across country WA, with a similar number planned for 2025–2026, providing education, professional development and networking opportunities tailored to local community health needs.

Independent feedback highlights the impact of the program:

- 85% of members report feeling more supported through their local network
- 95% would recommend HPN membership to colleagues
- Two-thirds report improved referral pathways, leading to better patient care outcomes

### **A Community-Driven Approach to Better Health**

The HPN program is delivered through strong partnerships with organisations including Rural Health West, WA Country Health Service, WA Primary Health Alliance, St John WA, Royal Flying Doctor Service, and leading rural training and professional bodies. These partnerships ensure local needs are met and that networks remain community-driven and responsive.

Membership of the Pilbara Health Professionals Network is free, and the *Welcome to 2026* events are also free for members, reinforcing the network's commitment to accessible support for regional health professionals.

#### **Event details**

- **What:** Health Professionals Network - Welcome to 2026 Event
- **Who:** Local health professionals and their families
- **Where & When:**
  - **Port Hedland:** Rays, Hedland Hotel Cnr Lukis and McGregor St, Port Hedland - Friday 13 February 5-7pm
  - **Karratha:** Ibis Styles Hotel (Alfresco area), 35/45 Searipple Rd, Karratha - Friday 20 February 5-7pm
- **Cost:** Free for HPN members

Health professionals can join their local network at [phpn.com.au](http://phpn.com.au)

Media contact:  
Belinda Baws  
Rural Health West  
0410 888 405