**Abstract submitted for the 4th Rural Health and Research Congress**

**Armidale 4-6 November 2015**

Congress Stream: Social determinants of health in the bush – the changing landscape

Alternative Stream: Partnerships and integrated care – connecting rural people and services

Abstract Title: “Healthy Futures Network”

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Background: A cross–sectoral and cross-departmental approach is essential to addressing the Social Determinants of Health (SDoH). A partnership of local Councils, primary health care and the local health district formed to discuss issues impacting the health of local populations and to increase community and organisational knowledge of the SDoH.

Approach: The “Healthy Futures Network” was established with an open membership base to grow the network and share knowledge and understanding of the SDoH. Sustainable projects have been implemented from this base, with a particular emphasis on education. The strongest predictor of health is a person’s position on the ‘social gradient’. For those who are most vulnerable or have complex needs, the most immediate health focus is influencing the social determinants.

Outcome: The ‘Healthy Futures’ Network was established, with a website, newsletter and membership application process. The Network is sponsored by the Moree Plains Shire Council for 12 months. Resources are shared, projects discussed and grant applications promoted.

Take home

message: In addressing the SDoH, all levels of Government need to work collaboratively.

Increasing awareness of the SDoH in a sustainable manner with bshort term and long term actions, is possible with a network of interested and relevant stakeholders.