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## HEALTH

# Rural health expert paying a visit

April 5, 2024

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Australian rural health workforce expert Dr Cath Cosgrave. PHOTO/SUPPLIED


An Australian expert in rural health will be in Wairarapa next week to discuss issues facing the sector.

The event – called Attract, Connect, Stay – will feature Australian researcher Dr Cath Cosgrave, who will be discussing topics relating to the recruitment and retention of rural health workforces at a two-day programme starting on Monday.

The schedule will start with a pōwhiri hosted by Rangitāne o Wairarapa at Pūkaha on Monday, April 8, after which Cosgrave will discuss her work.


On day two, small workshops are available for people with an interest in different types of health workforce.

The event is jointly hosted and organised by Tū Hauranga Trust and its trustees. A statement from Tū Hauranga Trust referenced Wairarapa's current experience recruiting health workers, in line with current international experience, which has strained the health system and the community.




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Cosgrave is one of Australia's leading experts in rural health workforces and her research highlights how they can be strengthened.

The results have helped rural health agencies, government departments, rural health services, and rural communities.

Aspects of her programme have gained international recognition for different ways of building strong rural health workforces, and Cosgrave has worked with rural communities to improve their ability to attract and retain healthcare professionals in their area.

"I'm deeply passionate about addressing rural access inequities and resource challenges and I'm dedicated to supporting rural communities to thrive and remain sustainable places to live and work," Cosgrave said.

Wairarapa is the first community in New Zealand to work with her comprehensively to adapt the programme.

Barbara Gladding, who leads the health sector group of the Wairarapa Skills Leadership Group, has been working with Cosgrave since October 2022 to bring the programme to Wairarapa.

"It's taken a long time to make sure we have the right elements in place to make this a success," she said.

"The central part of this is a group of passionate health and business leaders who now form a new legal entity – Tū Hauranga Trust – and who are leading the initiative.

"They're committed volunteer members of the trust who are well-connected to the Wairarapa community."

Gladding said a critical success factor had been seed funding from Tū Ora Compass Health the Primary Health Organisation, through Te Whatu Ora, and the Wairarapa Economic Development Strategy.

"When we have a health workforce in place who love living and working here long-term, we strengthen local health services.

"And when that happens patients can be seen in a timely way, so they can get back to full function at work, study, recreation, and home life without delays. It affects everyone, so everyone has a role to play in attracting and keeping vital health workers here," she said.

"While we're optimistic about what we can achieve, we know it can't happen overnight. These problems have been decades in the making, and it takes courage and momentum to achieve change over time. I'm confident that, with Dr Cosgrave's guidance, and the passion and commitment from Wairarapa people, we'll be able to make a sustainable difference over time."

Places are available for people wanting to attend either day, and all sessions are free for participants. For an invitation to the full wānanga [education session] on 8 April, or the small workshops on 9 April, please contact [info@waihealthskills.nz](mailto:info@waihealthskills.nz).

TAGS [Cath Cosgrave](#) [Rural health](#)

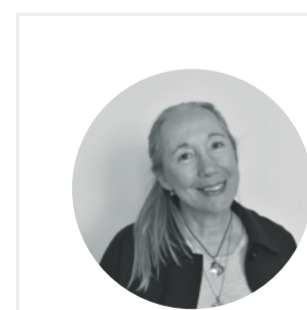
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