













There appears to be inadequate funding in the MedicarePlus initiatives for assessment, training or support for the GPs and specialists to be recruited. Doctors and their families who are attracted by the scheme will need a clear pathway of introduction to rural practice. Safe, high quality and successful practice as a doctor in rural and remote Australia requires careful matching to the requirements of individual communities, an understanding of a complex health system and a breadth of clinical and cultural competence.

"Those recruited to country areas will need to be properly assessed and fully supported for the challenges of work in the rural medical workforce," Ms McAlpin said.

The Alliance's other major concern is to see that there are strong incentives for placement in rural and remote areas, rather than in outer-metropolitan areas. "We would like to have positive discrimination for areas of greatest need, most of which are in rural and remote Australia - including towns which currently do not have any GP," Ms McAlpin said.

"We want to be sure that rural and remote communities will benefit from the MedicarePlus OTD Recruitment initiative. This means ensuring that doctors recruited through the 'five year scheme' will have real incentives and support to choose practice in rural and remote areas," Ms McAlpin said.

Finding more doctors for areas of need within Australia is vitally important. But it must be done in a way that protects and values the doctors themselves, their patients - and the millions overseas who are in the greatest need of health care.