

National Rural Health Alliance eforum - 17 May 2010

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BUDGET: SOME GOOD ANSWERS, MANY QUESTIONS AND A FEW DISAPPOINTMENTS

Tonight's Federal Budget has provided clarification of some of the key elements of health reform, but a great deal is still unclear or unknown as far as people in rural and remote areas are concerned.

The full text of the Alliance statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/mr-12-05-10.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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APRIL 2010 E-NEWS FROM THE ALLIANCE

Policy work

The Alliance has continued to track developments relating to health reform and its likely impact in rural and remote areas. At this stage the key issues seem to be: the structure and functions of the Local Hospital Networks in rural, regional and remote areas and the interrelationship between them and the Primary Healthcare Organisations; block funding and community service obligations for smaller hospitals; having the Commonwealth assume responsibility for the supply and distribution of all primary care professionals (including dentists and oral hygienists and other allied health professions); ensuring rural and remote areas receive a fair share of the extra money allocated for hospital beds, subacute care,

emergency departments, enrolment for those with diabetes, aged care and health workforce initiatives (eg placements).

The Alliance has an agreed position with PHAA, AHHA and the Australian Dental Association on the oral and dental workforce, and it is disappointing that improved policies for dental care have not yet been implemented. With the Senate blocking the Government's proposal for a new Commonwealth Dental Health Program, some other means must be found to urgently improve matters in this critical health area.

The Alliance has begun work on an updated position on choice, affordability and access to aged care services in rural and remote communities which will feed into the recently announced Productivity Commission inquiry into aged care. Work also continues on e-health, including a submission to the NEHTA Electronic Referrals Release 1; on costing the rural and remote health deficit (working with the AIHW); and with Palliative Care Australia, on end-of-life care.

You can provide your comments on e-health in rural and remote areas or view the latest Alliance submission at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/e-health/?IntCatId=45>

AJRH

Health reform is a major focus of the most recent issue of AJRH (April 2010). NRHA Executive Director Gordon Gregory's editorial sets the context for the current reform agenda and argues for the needs of rural and remote communities. The editorial is complemented by a policy review article outlining the recent history of health reform in Australia.

Other articles examine diabetes educator training and urban rural differences in psychiatric rehabilitation outcomes. There is an evaluation of a mobile screening service for abdominal aortic aneurysm, and a review of the availability of antidotes for the treatment of acute poisoning in Queensland public hospitals. Another article provides key reasons why rural and remote health is in need of theoretical development and how theoretical approaches would benefit rural and remote health.

Short reports cover a rural birth index; the use of Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) as tools to improve access to clinical information and learning; and factors to consider in establishing a videoconference medical oncology outreach clinic.

Partyline No 39

Contributions are now being sought for Issue number 39. What are your views on the current health reform initiatives? What are the reasons you enjoy living in rural Australia? Have you a photo of the best beauty spot in your local region? To contribute an article, photo, letter or poem, contact partyline@ruralhealth.org.au by 17 May.

RAMUS 2010

Congratulations to 81 new RAMUS scholars who have now commenced their scholarships. Scholarship offers to a further 87 applicants in 2010 are currently in process. Information about the RAMUS Scheme is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/scholarships/?IntCatId=7>

Rural Health Continuing Education

The Alliance has won the contract to manage Stream 2 of the Rural Health Continuing Education (RHCE) program. This is a program of Commonwealth grants to enable the

development and delivery of continuing professional development, multidisciplinary training and orientation programs for Aboriginal Health Workers, allied health professionals, general practitioners and nurses living and working in rural and remote Australia. Preference is to be given to multi-disciplinary training, to training in the usual workplace or local area, and to training for those in more rural and remote areas.

We are consulting with key stakeholders at present on the details of the scheme so that the money available under the program (about \$630,000 per year) is put to the best use. Subject to advice from stakeholders, we expect to invite applications for grants early in 2010-2011. Information will be available at <http://rhce.ruralhealth.org.au/> as the program develops.

'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991-2009' DVD

Get your copy by joining friends of the Alliance for 2010. A membership form is available on the friends page <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/friends/?IntCatId=4> of the Alliance's website. friends are also eligible to receive a discounted registration for the 11th National Rural Health Conference in March 2011.

Follow us on twitter

Follow the NRHA on Twitter <<http://twitter.com/NRHAlliance>> from the front page of our website.

Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium

The 2nd Rural & Remote Health Scientific Symposium, Brisbane, 9-11 June 2010.
Information: <http://rrhss.ruralhealth.org.au/>

11th National Rural Health Conference

Save the date for 11th National Rural Health Conference: Perth, 13-16 March 2011

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TIME FOR PARTNERSHIPS TO SHAPE RURAL HEALTH REFORM

The once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve Australia's health system now rests with local communities, health professions and other interested parties. They must work with governments to ensure that the new health system, broadly agreed by COAG, is developed and delivered in a way to really make a difference in access to services and in achieving better health outcomes for under-served communities. Health is everybody's business and community-government partnerships must work on the detail of the reforms to achieve practicable, lasting and equitable results.

The full text of the Alliance statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/mr-02-05-10.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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WANTED: CONFERENCE/ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF WITH BIG HEARTS!

Are you an experienced conference manager who would like to work on a well-regarded and highly credible national conference? We have just the job for you!

Are you experienced in using Microsoft Office and Events software and do you enjoy liaising with conference speakers and delegates? We have just the job for you!

Are you looking for full-time or part-time work providing administrative support in the office of a non-government organisation? We have the job for you!

The National Rural Health Alliance is gearing up for the 11th National Rural Health Conference - Rural and Remote Australia: Heart of a Healthy Nation; and now has the opportunity for up to three people to join its team in Canberra.

All our work has the aim of improving the health of people living and working in rural and remote Australia. More information is available at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

We are a friendly organisation willing to negotiate terms and conditions according to the skills, experience and availability of individual candidates.

If you are interested, please send your resume to leanne@ruralhealth.org.au or fax it to (02) 6285 4670. Enquiries to Leanne Coleman on 02 6285 4660.

Save the date for 11th National Rural Health Conference: Perth, 13-16 March 2011

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NRHA on TWITTER

From <http://twitter.com/NRHAlliance>

Tony Abbott's Budget reply indicates Opposition view on GP Super Clinics, e-health
<http://bit.ly/aNa19k>

The electorate won't want to focus just on resource rent tax and health. T. O'Neill Snr was right: all politics is local

Rob Oakeshott MP on importance of Local Hospital Networks' boundaries, funding and governance - <http://bit.ly/amRZWa>

Strong interest from indiv. rural communities in health reform: "What does it mean for us?"
Answer: get in and tell govts. how it should be!

Opportunity for health reform is now with communities and professions: to make sure it's rolled out so as to suit us: <http://bit.ly/bo439Y>

PM urged by RRH Workforce Roundtable to guarantee future of rural Hospitals -
<http://bit.ly/cXAFkQ>

Commonwealth's responsibility for primary care should mean better workforce and patient travel schemes: <http://bit.ly/d6g74a>

PM urged by RRH Workforce Roundtable to guarantee future of rural Hospitals

Commonwealth's responsibility for primary care should lead to better workforce programs and patient travel schemes

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NRHA on YouTube

(<http://www.youtube.com/user/RuralHealthAlliance>)

Nurse TV: The Country's Voice
Public Seminar 2009

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Highlights of the new section on the Alliance's website where you can keep in touch and provide your comments on e-health developments in rural and remote areas at (<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/e-health/?IntCatId=45>)

* The Alliance's position paper on the rural and remote implications of a national e-health strategy - <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/publications/final%20e-health%20position%20paper.pdf>

* Contribute information and views - <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/e-health/?IntContId=14852&IntCatId=45>

* Follow the development of broadband and electronic communications in rural and remote communities - <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/e-health/?IntContId=14851&IntCatId=45>

* Help improve our understanding of progress towards shared individual electronic health records - <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/e-health/?IntContId=14853&IntCatId=45>

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RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH PAPERS 1991 - 2009 DVD

Where can you easily access 3,189 references to the words 'rural health'?

All 3,189 documents can be found on the updated 'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991-2009' DVD available when you join friends of the Alliance (see <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/friends/?IntCatId=4>)

You will also find 2,510 references to 'remote health', 526 references to 'health reform', 1,359 references to 'aboriginal health', and 315 references to 'oral health'.

What will you search for when you get your copy? The DVD contains the proceedings of all ten National Rural Health Conferences, all Alliance policy documents, annual reports, media releases and newsletters.

Don't forget friends of the Alliance also receive a discounted registration for the 11th National Rural Health Conference to be held in Perth, 13-16 March 2011.

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WOMAN WHO DREAMS OF MEDICAL CAREER AWARDED AMA INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' MEDICAL SCHOLARSHIP

A former high school teacher and mentor who wants to improve the health of Indigenous people has won the AMA Indigenous Peoples' Medical Scholarship for 2010. Karen Taylor was awarded the scholarship by AMA Federal Vice President and Chair of the AMA Indigenous Health Taskforce, Dr Steve Hambleton
<http://www.ama.com.au/node/5606>

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JOIN FRIENDS

We would like to encourage you to join or renew your membership of friends of the Alliance for another year. The cost of membership is unchanged: \$44 (including GST) for an individual, \$165 for an organisation of less than 50 people, and \$330 for a large organisation.

On joining you will receive a friends membership pack including a certificate, the Rural and Remote Health Papers CD, lapel pin, fact sheets and the latest annual report. A membership form can also be found on the friends page of the Alliance website at
<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/friends/?IntCatId=4>

The NRHA values the input of friends and finds its advice and contributions invaluable to the work of the Alliance.

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MARCH EDITION OF PARTYLINE OUT NOW

Partyline 38 is available on the National Rural Health Alliance website. This edition was produced in conjunction with the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute (APHCRI) at the ANU and contains two feature articles from APHCRI. It has a focus on health reform and includes responses to health announcements from both the Prime Minister and the Opposition Leader. Two remote area nurses reflect on the challenges faced by their profession, and some RAMUS scholars report on their rural placements. There are articles on dental health, regional development, rural GP locum schemes, and an e-health update, as well as information on resources and news on rural health.

To contribute to future editions (article, photo, letter to the editor, poem), contact partyline@ruralhealth.org.au Back copies are available on the Partyline page of the website at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/publications/?IntContId=57&IntCatId=6>

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AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF RURAL HEALTH

The Australian Journal of Rural Health is a multidisciplinary journal, which aims to facilitate the formation of interdisciplinary networks to build and advance rural practice for all health professionals. Get published in the Australian Journal of Rural Health! The Journal welcomes short reports and letters to the editor as well as review articles, original research articles and

clinical perspectives. For useful tips on submitting your manuscript, read the FREE editorial, How to get published in the Australian Journal of Rural Health.

Manuscripts can be submitted online at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ajrh> Manuscript Central or posted to AJRH. The Australian Journal of Rural Health is published on behalf of the National Rural Health Alliance by Blackwell Publishing Asia Pty Ltd 155 Cremorne Street Richmond Vic. 3121 Tel: +61 (0)3 9274 3100 Fax: +61 (0)3 9274 3101 E-mail: melbourne@johnwiley.com.au

April 2010 issue now available. Contents include:

Editorial - Health reform and the immediate needs of rural and remote communities

Policy Review - A brief history of 'Health reform' in Australia, 2007-2009

Viewpoint - Charting the future course of rural health and remote health in Australia: Why we need theory

Original Articles

From rural beginnings to statewide roll-out: Evaluation of facilitator training for a group-based diabetes prevention program

Urban-rural differences in psychiatric rehabilitation outcomes

Evaluation of a mobile screening service for abdominal aortic aneurysm in Broken Hill, a remote regional centre in far western NSW

Availability of antidotes for the treatment of acute poisoning in Queensland public hospitals

Short Reports

Rural Birth Index for Australia?

Medical students out of town but not out of touch: Use of personal digital assistants to improve access to clinical information and enhance learning at the point of care in rural and remote Australia

Factors to consider when starting up a videoconference medical oncology outreach clinic

Further information at <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/loi/ajr>

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RURAL HEALTH ON THE WEB

(From <http://www.gigaalert.com/>

State Office of Rural Health and Primary Care. The mission of the Idaho State Office of Rural Health and Primary Care is to promote access to quality ...

<http://www.ruralhealth.dhw.idaho.gov/>

Rural Health Research Centers help policy-makers better understand the problems that rural communities face in accessing quality, affordable health ...

<http://www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/policy/centers/index.html>

The mission of the Upper Peninsula Association of Rural Health Services is to provide high quality primary health care with respect and compassion to all in need. ...

<http://upruralhealth.org/>

The Office of Rural Health Policy (ORHP) promotes better health care service in rural America.

<http://www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/>

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LIFELINE INFORMATION SERVICE

The Lifeline Information Service provides access to a variety of self-help tool kits with information about issues such as mental illness, depression, suicide prevention, and more. These resources focus on practical steps to help promote mental health and are available online at <http://www.lifeline.org.au/infoservice>

A limited number of printed tool kits are available on request by emailing infoservice@lifeline.org.au. For more information please visit <http://www.lifeline.org.au>

If you are in need of 24 hour crisis support, call Lifeline on 13 11 14

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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT NEWS

Funding Round Open for 80 Indigenous Traineeships in Remote Communities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will have the opportunity to undertake traineeships in aged care and frontline healthcare services under a \$15.7 million program to help boost job opportunities in remote Indigenous communities. The Indigenous Remote Service Delivery (IRSD) traineeships are part of the National Partnership on Indigenous Economic Participation, which aims to create up to 2,000 new jobs and 400 new traineeships to support the delivery of government services in rural and remote Australia. "The Indigenous Remote Service Delivery traineeships provide some great opportunities.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-ws-ws041.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2010&mth=5>

Rural and regional Australians better off under the NBN

The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Senator Stephen Conroy said Australians living in rural and regional Australia had the most to gain from the National Broadband Network (NBN).

http://www.minister.dbcde.gov.au/media/media_releases/2010/042

Australian Government Invests \$6m to Strengthen Indigenous Fathers and Families

Minister for Indigenous Health and Rural and Regional Health, Warren Snowdon announced \$6 million would be invested in a new parenting initiative called Strong Fathers, Strong Families for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men. - Deliver initiatives and services that take into account the needs of Australian males and promote optimal health outcomes for all Australian males. Australian Government programs that support Indigenous mothers and babies.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-ws-ws040.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2010&mth=5>

Indigenous communities in the tropical north of Australia are amongst the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, a new report has found. Released in the Torres Strait, the "Risks from Climate Change to Indigenous Communities in the Tropical North of Australia" report finds climate change will have a significant impact on indigenous communities in the tropical north. This is despite the fact that indigenous communities have adapted to natural

changes to the climate over thousands of years.

<http://www.climatechange.gov.au/en/publications/adaptation/risks-from-climate-change-to-indigenous-communities.aspx>

New Health Centre Opens in Tennant Creek

The Minister for Indigenous Health and Rural and Regional Health, Warren Snowdon, has officially opened the new health centre at Tennant Creek. 'The new, larger centre will replace the original health centre, providing increased services in more modern facilities to people in Tennant Creek, the region's Town camps and remote communities in the Barkly region,' Mr Snowdon said. 'The new health centre in Tennant Creek has the capacity to see more than 60 patients a day, double what was possible at the old health centre,' he said.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-ws-ws037.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2010&mth=5>

Indigenous Health Minister Launches Food Summit

Minister for Indigenous Health, Warren Snowdon, launched the Fresh Food Summit of the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT).

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-ws-ws038.htm>

Healing Foundation makes milestone move towards healing

The Australian Government today welcomed a milestone in the establishment of the Healing Foundation as Australia's key body to support healing projects in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

http://www.jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/jennymacklin.nsf/content/healing_foundation_7may10.htm

BUDGET PAPERS

The Budget Papers are available at <http://www.budget.gov.au/>

Budget Paper No 2 on Budget Measures is at <http://www.budget.gov.au/2010-11/content/bp2/html/index.htm>

Measures for the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

are at http://www.budget.gov.au/2010-11/content/bp2/html/bp2_expense-10.htm. These include A new scheme of income management in the Northern Territory and Indigenous Communities Strategic Investment program - reduction

Measures for the Department of Health and Ageing

are at http://www.budget.gov.au/2010-11/content/bp2/html/bp2_expense-13.htm. These include Addressing domestic violence - continuing training for health workers in regional and rural areas

COAG Health Services - aligning services in rural and remote areas - more efficient arrangements

Combating petrol sniffing - expanding the supply and uptake of Opal fuel

Drought assistance - Mental Health Support for Drought-Affected Communities program - extension

National Health and Hospitals Network - eHealth - personally controlled electronic health records

National Health and Hospitals Network - General practice and primary care - improving

access to primary care
National Health and Hospitals Network - Workforce - expanding clinical placement
scholarships for allied health students
National Health and Hospitals Network - Workforce - rural locum scheme for allied health
professionals
National Health and Hospitals Network - Workforce - rural locum scheme for nurses

Budget paper No 4 on Agency Resourcing is at <http://www.budget.gov.au/2010-11/content/bp4/html/index.htm> and Portfolio Budget Statements are at <http://www.budget.gov.au/2010-11/content/pbs/html/index.htm>

Ministerial Statement on A National Health and Hospitals Network for Australia's Future is at http://www.budget.gov.au/2010-11/content/glossy/health/html/health_overview_01.htm

Ministerial Statement on a Stronger Rural and Regional Communities is at http://www.budget.gov.au/2010-11/content/ministerial_statements/rural_and_regional/html/index_rural_regional.htm

Ministerial Statement on Closing the Gap - Building Momentum is at http://www.budget.gov.au/2010-11/content/ministerial_statements/indigenous/html/index_indigenous.htm

Rudd Government Continues to Tackle the Rural Health Challenge
Building a National Health and Hospitals Network will deliver better health and hospitals for rural Australians and their families
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-ws-ws043.htm>

Closing the Gap - Strengthening Indigenous Communities
The Budget continues the Government's commitment to closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians - health reforms will mean real, on-the-ground improvements in health and hospital care for Indigenous Australians.
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-nr-nr098.htm>

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OTHER BUDGET REACTION

(From <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/media/budget-2010-11/budget.asp>)

ACAA Budget 2010 a mixed bag for aged care
ACSA No frills budget leaves aged care in rags
ADCA Alcohol and other Drugs - In or Out of Health Reform
AFGC Preventative health report 'slipped under the door'
AGPN better access to after hours services signals arrival of PHCOS
AGPN Budget delivers for australia's health care future
AHHA Budget will help deliver COAG reforms
AHHA Dental hole left by Budget
ALZHEIMERS AUSTRALIA one million australians forgotten in the federal budget
AMA Welcomes substantial investment in health

ANF Aged care workers and residents big winners in budget 2010
ANGLICARE Federal budget - 'a restraint too far'
CHA Federal Budget a boon to sustainable aged care
CHF Budget Delivers High Strike Rate on health
COTA Aged care still waiting
COTA Federal budget in neutral for seniors-the election awaits
CPSA Budget with no bite - no dental for pensioners but aged care boost welcome
MA Medicines Australia welcomes e-health investment
NPHCP Budget focus on primary health care teams is a big win for patients
NS A healthy budget for seniors
NSW Farmers Failure to Invest Leaves Regional NSW at Risk
PHAA Budget Landmark response on Prevention
RACGP Federal Budget recognises the central role of GP
RCNA Aged care initiatives welcomed but let's look beyond the general practice environment
RDAA With a severe lack of rural workforce measures, this budget really needs a doctor
TRUSS Budget another lost opportunity for regional Australia

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AIHW REPORT

Health system expenditure on disease and injury in Australia, 2004-05
Health system expenditure on disease and injury in Australia, 2004-05 provides a systematic analysis of health system expenditures associated with specific disease and injury groups in Australia in 2004-05. Expenditure on cardiovascular disease is compared with expenditure on cancer, injuries, nervous system disorders and other diseases. Health expenditure for each age group ranges from \$2,223 per year for girls/boys aged 5 to 14 years to \$8,030 per year for women/men aged 75 to 84 years. This report also discusses the changes in expenditure by disease between 2000-01 and 2004-05.

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10632>

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AUSTRALIAN ORGAN DONOR REGISTER ONLINE

The Australian Organ Donor Register is Australia's only national organ and tissue donor register and serves as a lifeline to the people on the organ transplant waiting lists. Register online at <http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/public/services/aodr/register.jsp> to be an Australian Organ Donor now!

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ABS RELEASES

Biggest ever Australian Health Survey

The health of Australians will be getting its most comprehensive check-up ever, with the announcement of the Australian Health Survey. 'This is an important survey for all Australians,' the Australian Statistician, Mr Brian Pink said, 'it will be the most comprehensive health survey ever undertaken by the ABS and will be an important benchmark to help determine future health strategies.'

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mediareleasesbyReleaseDate/D2908CA48131C672CA2577200020E155?OpenDocument>

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, Australia: Summary Booklet, 2008 (Cat 4714.0.55.003)

The 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey summary booklets are intended for use by Indigenous Engagement Managers while visiting Indigenous Communities. They present a shorter summary of the results from the 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, on a wide range of topics including population, culture and language, health, education, labour force, housing, family and support networks, children and young adults.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4714.0.55.003?OpenDocument>

Population Characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2006 (Cat 4713.0)

Understanding Indigenous population data, Population distribution and structure, Mobility, Household and family composition, Language and religion, Education, Work, Income, Housing and transport, Need for assistance, Torres Strait Islanders

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4713.0?OpenDocument>

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BUSH SUPPORT SERVICES (formerly Bush Crisis Line) - 1800 805 391

The Bush Support Services Line is a 24 hour confidential telephone support service for workers, and their families, who work in health related services in remote and isolated situations. It is staffed by qualified psychologists with remote and cross cultural experience, is toll free and available from anywhere in Australia. For more information:

<http://www.bss.crana.org.au>

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BUILDING A HEALTHY FUTURE FOR RURAL AND REGIONAL VICTORIA

A new Bendigo Hospital, a second hospital for Geelong and investment in a new cancer centre at Ballarat headline the Brumby Labor Government's boost to build world class hospitals and deliver even better healthcare for regional and rural Victorian families.

http://www.health.vic.gov.au/doh/downloads/statebudget/regional_health.pdf

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RURAL HEALTH ON THE ABC

(See <http://www.abc.net.au/health/healthyliving/yourhealth/ruralregionalhealth/>)

Dealing with depression

Support for those with mental health issues remains a big challenge in rural Australia.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/telegraph/content/2010/s2898447.htm>

Remote NT misses out on health funding in short term

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/nt/content/201005/s2898785.htm>

Senate 'alarmed' by Indigenous ear health

A Senate inquiry has found there is a crisis in Indigenous ear health, with Indigenous people up to 10 times more likely to suffer ear disease and hearing loss than other Australians.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/13/2898516.htm>

http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/clac_ctte/hearing_health/report/index.htm

Rural doctors question super clinic feasibility

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) says it is not sure whether the Federal Government's budget promise of more GP super clinics will work.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/12/2897270.htm>

Rural doctors say smaller towns still missing out

The Rural Doctors Association of Queensland says it's disappointed the Federal Government hasn't made changes to a new geographical classification system set to come in this July.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/201005/s2897214.htm>

Budget targets Top End petrol sniffing scourge

The Federal Government has allocated tens of millions of dollars to help roll out the low-aromatic Opal fuel across the Top End in an effort to cut petrol sniffing rates.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/12/2897194.htm>

Budget 'fails to deliver' on mental health

Doctors have welcomed the \$7.3 billion in health spending announced in the federal budget but are concerned the areas of Indigenous and mental health were ignored.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/12/2896787.htm>

Rural doctors want bigger budget share

The Rural Doctors Association wants the Federal Government to commit to spending a third of the money it is pouring into the health system in rural and regional areas.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/11/2895929.htm>

Uni talks up speech pathology scheme

The waiting list for paediatric patients wanting speech therapy at Broken Hill Hospital no longer exists, thanks to university student placements in the region.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/06/2891754.htm>

Child health scheme wins award

The Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation's Healthy Start program, designed to improve the health and wellbeing of children aged up to five, has been recognised at the new national health awards.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/06/2891741.htm>

Climate change report highlights Indigenous health risks

A new report has found the health of Indigenous Australians living in coastal areas such as the Torres Strait could be at risk due to climate change.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/05/2891298.htm>

The flying doctors

A new exhibition charting the history of the Royal Flying Doctor Service has opened at the State Library in Perth. Former ABC broadcaster Peter Holland shared his family's link to the

service on Afternoons with Gillian O'Shaughnessy.
<http://www.abc.net.au/local/audio/2010/05/04/2889870.htm>

Five new planes for SA Flying Doctor
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/audio/2010/04/30/2886900.htm>

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RDAА NEWS

Media alert -- SBS TV to put outback heroines...and the rewards of rural medical careers...in front of national audience

10 May 2010

http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/RHEF%20and%20RDAA%20documentary%20--%20Outback%20Healers%20and%20Heroines%20--%20May%202010.pdf

RDAА budget reaction -- With a severe lack of rural workforce measures, this budget really needs a doctor

11 May 2010

http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Budget%20reaction%20--%20May%202010.pdf

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GET REGIONAL

Get Regional is the new information and referral service for people living and working throughout country Australia. Engaging and interacting rural, regional and remote communities, via dynamic interactive technologies, to ensure a more sustainable future for the bush. The most up-to-date and independent information service with a wide range of broadcast distribution services.

<http://getregional.com.au>

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ARTICLE IN 'RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH'

'Retention policies for allied health professionals in rural areas: a survey of private practitioners'

Public or private, the grass always appears greener on the other side - the Australian rural healthcare system wouldn't survive without both. This article gives an insight into some of the issues and perceptions of rural allied health professionals working in private practice.

<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=1331>

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CURRENT ISSUE OF eMJA

(Available at <http://www.mja.com.au/>)

Current issue: 3 May 2010

From the Editor's Desk: Dehumanising hospital wards

Editorials

The Health Insurance Amendment (Pathology Requests) Bill 2010: the risks to patients when the Department of Finance and Deregulation makes health policy

Lightening our carbon footprint: economics, norms and doctors

Role of triple antithrombotic therapy in patients with atrial fibrillation and coronary artery stents

Research

Australian clinical practice guidelines - a national study

Establishment of a successful assessment and treatment service for Australian prison inmates with chronic hepatitis C

Do users of mental health services lack access to general practitioner services?

Health Care Reform

The Rudd government's health reform 2010

Prime Minister Rudd's plan for reforming Australian public hospitals

Reforming Australian health care: the first instalment

Taking the first step toward a healthier future

The 2010 Rudd plan: will it actually deliver better health services?

The Rudd reforms: a poisoned chalice in the long run

The Rudd hospital plan - many pitfalls to avoid on the way to a better health system

Medicine and the Law Restricted career paths for overseas students graduating from Australian medical schools: legal and policy considerations

Clinical Update - Percutaneous management of aortic stenosis in high-risk patients

For Debate - Super size me: is a big Australia good for our health?

Viewpoint

Reforming Australia's health system, again

The carbon footprints of obesity, chronic disease and population growth: four things doctors can do

Lessons from Practice - Swimming pool filter-induced transrectal evisceration in children: Australian experience

Letters

An audit of pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza vaccine wastage in general practice

Pandemic influenza testing at the coalface: time for reassessment?

Heterotopic pancreas causing intussusception in a child

Pneumonia risk stratification in tropical Australia: does the SMART-COP score apply?

Computerised prescribing: assessing the impact on prescription repeats and on generic substitution of some commonly used antibiotics

Snapshot - Dyspnoea caused by retained food in the oesophagus

Research - Early evidence for direct and indirect effects of the infant rotavirus vaccine program in Queensland

Book Review - Older road users. Myths and realities, a guide for medical and legal professionals

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National Palliative Care Week - 23-29 May 2010

<http://www.palliativecare.org.au/Default.aspx?tabid=2114>

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2nd Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium

The Alliance is one of four organisations auspicing the 2nd Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium to be held in Brisbane, 9-11 June 2010. Further information:

<http://rrhss.ruralhealth.org.au/>

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RDAQ 2010

11 - 13 June 2010

Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre

Contact: Sarah Smith / 07 3105 7800 / ssmith@healthworkforce.com.au

This conference is a unique opportunity for all healthcare professionals to access key politicians and decision makers and to have their say on the future of rural health.

Sarah Smith

Project Officer - MET Events

Health Workforce Queensland

Postal: GPO Box 2523, Brisbane Q 4001

Office: Level 1, 410 Queen Street Brisbane 4000

Ph: 07 3105 7800 Fax: 07 3105 7801

Email: ssmith@healthworkforce.com.au

Web: <http://www.healthworkforce.com.au>

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Inaugural National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Conference (NIDAC 2010): Listening, Learning and Leading.

16 - 18 June 2010

Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide, South Australia

The National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Conference aims to assist and contribute to further develop the capacity of those working to address the harms associated with the use of alcohol and other drugs in meaningful and practical ways. The Conference will also showcase and celebrate the quiet efforts and achievements of those striving to improve the health and well being of our communities. It is a time for listening, learning and leading the way on what can be accomplished on this important health and social issue within Australia.

To view flyer and details go to <http://www.nidaconference.com.au/>

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Australia's Health 2010 Conference

22-23 June 2010

National Convention Centre, 27-31 Constitution Ave, Canberra

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/eventsdiary/index.cfm#ah10>

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Primary Health Care Research and Health Reform: Improving Care Conference

Wednesday 30 June 2010 - Friday 2 July 2010

Darwin, Northern Territory

Come to Darwin for the 2010 PHC Research Conference - Primary health care research and health reform: Improving care, and participate in one of the premier primary health care networking events.

This conference is a must for anyone with an interest in primary health care research, evaluation and development. It will provide essential opportunities for researchers, decision makers, practitioners and consumers to share ideas, debate critical PHC matters, form collaborations and network with speakers and other delegates.

The program is an exciting blend of plenary sessions, workshops, symposia, poster and paper sessions, and influential presenters from both Australia and overseas. Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, it is supported by both the Australian Association of Academic Primary Care (AAAPC) and the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute (APHCRI, based at ANU).

Presented by PHCRIS
Event website: <http://www.phcris.org.au/conference/2010>

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NAIDOC Week
4-11 July 2010
<http://www.naidoc.org.au/index.aspx>

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National University Rural Health Conference

NURHC '10 will be held in Alice Springs from 15-17 July. With Ernie Dingo confirmed as our conference MC, over 400 nursing, allied health and medical members attending, inspiring speakers, student presentations, interactive workshops and several awards for members, there is no better place to be this July. More information at <http://www.nrhsn.org.au/site/index.cfm?display=166567>

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2010 Secretariat for National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) Conference
Alice Springs, 27-29 July
<http://www.snaicc.asn.au/policy/conference>

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Assistive Technology: The tip of the iceberg
Australian Rehabilitation & Assistive Technology Association National Conference
Tuesday 10 - Friday 13 August 2010, Hobart, TAS

On behalf of the conference organising committee, it is our pleasure to invite you to the 2010 ARATA National Conference, AT: The tip of the iceberg, to be held in Hobart, Tasmania, from Tuesday 10- Friday 13 August 2010. With the conference being held in Hobart,

Tasmania, the home of the ice breakers heading to the Antarctic, papers will similarly crack through the surface to look more deeply at what lies beneath, explore new frontiers and meet the challenges of the pitfalls and crevasses. There will be an emphasis on thinking beyond the prescription of equipment to look more deeply at the issues of funding, training and support for users and their support personnel, and helping consumers to have the endurance to persevere with their equipment, despite the obstacles. Like the Antarctic explorers, there will be a focus on research and discovery - showcasing new products and ensuring ease in the use of equipment by capitalising on universal design and mainstream products. 'ARATAS 2010' will be full of new territory to explore, with the promise of many adventures to come in the field of Assistive Technology.

Karen Frost & Christopher Bryg

Convenors, ARATAS 2010

For information about ARATA, and the 2010 conference, visit the website at <http://www.e-bility.com/arata/conf.php>

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9th World Indigenous Women and Wellness Conference

Hosted by the Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation

22-25 August 2010

Darwin

The corporation welcomes all people who are interested in, or concerned with, Indigenous women and wellness to get involved in the conference and particularly encourages the participation of Indigenous women. More information from Jodie Farrow, Community Health Engagement/Health Promotions Officer, Danila Dilba Health Service, email jodie.farrow@daniladilba.org.au T: 08 89435100, F: 08 89435101, W: <http://www.daniladilba.org.au>

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Healing Our Spirit 2010

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers and researchers are advised to start planning now for Healing Our Spirit Worldwide The Sixth Gathering, which is due to take place on the island of Honolulu in Hawaii from 3 to 10 September 2010. The goal of Healing Our Spirit Worldwide (HOSW) is to celebrate the diverse and unique cultural strengths, knowledge and talents of Indigenous peoples around the world, with a particular focus on successes, best practices and common issues in health, healing and addictions.

The Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health is a proud supporter of and committed participant in the gathering, which will be hosted by native Hawaiian healthcare organisation Papa Ola Lōkahi (<http://www.papaolalokahi.org>).

For more information:

Maria Halkitis - Contract Manager, 08 8943 5020

Mick Gooda - CEO, 0409 688 403

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AAQHC 2010 Registration Now Open!

The Organising Committee is pleased to announce that registration is now open for the 8th Australasian Conference on Safety and Quality in Health Care to be held in Perth from 6 - 8 September 2010.

The Conference is the premier event on the Australasian Safety and Quality in Health Care calendar and will appeal to all clinicians and managers from acute hospitals, aged care and primary care who are interested in providing safe, quality care to patients and their families. Register now to secure your attendance and take advantage of the early bird rate!

For further information and to view the provisional program please visit the Conference website at <http://aaqhc2010.cmail2.com/t/y/1/oudjrk/udityupl/d>

Contact Details:

8th Australasian Conference on Safety and Quality in Health Care
Managed by arinex Pty limited
GPO Box 128, (Level 10, 51 Druitt Street)
Sydney NSW 2001, Australia
Phone: +61 2 9265 0700
Email: aaqhc2010@arinex.com.au

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14th Chronic Diseases Network (CDN) Conference - 'Health Literacy: Opening doors to health and wellbeing'

Darwin, 9-10 September

The 2010 CDN conference will focus on the role and impact of health literacy on the prevention and management of chronic conditions and its importance in achieving positive health outcomes. More information from CDN, T: (08) 8922 8280, E: chronicdiseasesnetwork@nt.gov.au

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ACSA Twenty 10

ACSA's annual National Conference. "Explore the possibilities" will be held at the Grand Chancellor Hotel on Hobart's waterfront from Sunday September 19 to Wednesday September 22. The Twenty 10 National Conference is the most important aged and community care event this year and we want you to be part of the action.

In addition to traditional presentations, this year's conference will also include a new concept - an Ideas Market Place. Projects, ideas and innovations suited to PowerPoint presentations displayed on designated screens, will run throughout the Conference. The Ideas Market Place will allow delegates to gather for informal discussions on the presentations displayed. More details, including how to make a submission for the Ideas Market Place, will be provided in the coming weeks.

For any queries contact Conference Design at (03) 6231 2999

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Creating Futures 2010 - Harnessing creativity and social enterprise for mental health and wellbeing

Cairns, Far North Queensland
20~24 September, 2010

Creating Futures 2010, auspiced by the Centre for Rural & Remote Mental Health Queensland, is the fourth conference in a series in which the populations of interest are indigenous peoples from Australia, New Zealand, North America and the Pacific Islands and people living and working in rural and remote areas.

As with the previous Creating Futures conferences, there will be a focus on the social determinants of health. Creating Futures 2010 will also highlight creativity and social entrepreneurial approaches, posing the question: How is it possible to harness the creativity and energy of the social enterprise sector to address the underpinning social determinants of mental health and wellbeing in the populations of interest?

A National Workshop about Me and My Community, a Centre for Rural & Remote Mental Health Queensland project aimed at developing leadership capacity and mental health and wellbeing knowledge among young people and women working in the farming sector in rural and remote Australia, will be held on Friday, 24 September. This will follow a dedicated stream of presentations addressing the impact of environmental and other challenges impacting on rural and remote communities on 23 September.

For more information visit the website at <http://www.crrmhq.com.au>

Invitation to attend

Creating Futures convenor, Professor Ernest Hunter, and the Centre for Rural & Remote Mental Health Queensland cordially invite you to attend this exciting, inspiring event that will develop your professional practice and challenge your thinking about mental health and wellbeing in the 21st century. If you wish to be included in the mailing list to receive the advance program and registration brochure, please email your postal address with "Creating Futures" in the subject line to info@conorg.com.au

For further details regarding the meeting, please contact:

The Conference Organiser Pty Ltd
146 Leicester Street
Carlton, Victoria, AUSTRALIA 3053
Phone: Australia: (03) 9349 2220
Email: info@conorg.com.au
Fax: Australia: (03) 9349 2230
<http://www.conorg.com.au>

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Rural Medicine Australia 2010
Scientific forum and conference

Rural Medicine Australia 2010, the national conference of ACRRM and the Rural Doctors Association of Australia, will this year include a scientific forum. The theme for this important gathering of doctors and others passionate about rural and remote medicine is 'Bringing it all together'. The venue is Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart. RMA 2010 will run from 22 to 24 October. Almost 300 people attended Rural Medicine Australia 2009 in Melbourne. We will shortly be calling for abstracts and launching the RMA 2010 website with registration and accommodation information.

<http://www.acrrm.org.au/news/rural-medicine-australia-2010-0>

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Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and other Drugs (APSAD)

2010 Conference, in Canberra, on 28 November-1 December. Under the theme, Building on the Capital, the conference will feature international and national speakers with a focus on new treatment, prevention and policy in the areas of drug and alcohol research. Symposia and abstracts that address all aspects of licit and illicit drug use/misuse are invited. For more information, <http://www.apsadconference.com.au/> or apsad@wsm.com.au

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The **11th National Rural Health Conference** will be held in Perth on 13-16 March 2011.

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CONTRIBUTION AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION AND DISCLAIMER

The NRHA e-forum is published fortnightly. Contributions are sought on any topic relevant to rural health concerns. Please send contributions to the moderator at grovesc@winshop.com.au (do not "reply" to this email - send contributions to grovesc@winshop.com.au). Contributions received by the Friday of publication will be included in the e-forum.

The NRHA e-forum is edited by a third party moderator, Jim Groves. As such, the Alliance does not control postings and the contents do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Alliance. Nor do postings necessarily reflect the views of Jim Groves or any organisation he is associated with. Jim Groves can be contacted at grovesc@winshop.com.au

Please forward a copy to any colleague you think may be interested.

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NRHA Media Release

11 May 2010

Budget: Some good answers, many questions and a few disappointments

Tonight's Federal Budget has provided clarification of some of the key elements of health reform, but a great deal is still unclear or unknown as far as people in rural and remote areas are concerned.

Jenny May, Chairperson of the Alliance, said that the key issue still remains whether people in rural and remote areas can be assured of their fair share of the big ticket items in the health reform agenda such as additional hospital beds, subacute care, and investments in emergency departments and elective surgery.

"It's also vital for rural people to see how the local hospital networks and the new primary care organisations will work together for better health," Dr May said.

The Budget has allocated substantial funds for these new regionalised primary care organisations, to be known as Medicare Locals. "Given the importance of a very close working relationship between these agencies and the Local Hospital Networks, we wait with interest to see whether they have common boundaries and are based on communities of interest," she said.

"We are pleased to have confirmation that rural and remote areas will be prioritised in the additional training and training places for GPs and specialists," Dr May said. "There are also welcome new investments in locum programs and clinical training scholarships for nursing and allied health professionals, and some increases in the number and capacity of Multi-Purpose Services (MPSs).

The introduction of an opt-in "personally controlled electronic health record" will be of benefit to people such as those in rural and remote Australians who have to travel to access health care services.

However people in rural and remote areas will be disappointed at the lack of action on the dental health workforce, maternity services and on patients' accommodation and travel. "We will continue to argue that the Commonwealth's newly-agreed responsibility for primary care brings with it responsibility for the supply and distribution of dentists and oral therapists, and for a uniform national patients' assisted travel scheme," Dr May said.

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NRHA Media Release

2 May 2010

Time for partnerships to shape rural health reform

The once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve Australia's health system now rests with local communities, health professions and other interested parties. They must work with governments to ensure that the new health system, broadly agreed by COAG, is developed and delivered in a way to really make a difference in access to services and in achieving better health outcomes for under-served communities. Health is everybody's business and community-government partnerships must work on the detail of the reforms to achieve practicable, lasting and equitable results.

Dr Jenny May, Chairperson of the National Rural Health Alliance, said that there has never been a time in the Australian health system when there was so much opportunity and yet so much further work to be done.

"For those who want to be involved there are two potential positions," Dr May said. "Either we can wring our hands at the uncertainties and criticise and oppose the reform directions, or we can be positive, proactive and make sure that what is eventually rolled out suits us well.

"The Alliance sees itself as partly responsible for how the system will look in rural and remote areas in five years' time," Dr May said. "Certainly we have concerns and many questions - and it is vital that there is constructive engagement between governments and community to resolve issues and determine priorities.

People of rural and remote areas will be particularly concerned about the boundaries and the roles for the Primary Healthcare Organisations (PHCOs), how the community service obligations of smaller hospitals will be funded and maintained, and how these primary care organisations and local hospitals will work together to provide well integrated services and improve health outcomes. On their behalf, the Alliance is pursuing further clarity and direction on these matters.

"We are also concerned about the notion the local clinicians can't be on local hospital boards," Dr May said.

"It is also worrying to see that oral health seems still to be left out in the cold. Oral health has to be part of primary care and, with the Commonwealth responsible for all primary care funding and policy, it simply must deal with this issue," she said.

There is a level of optimism about the Commonwealth assuming responsibility for primary care because this will allow it to take the lead role in improving the rural health workforce and in providing patients assisted travel schemes across the nation. For people in rural and remote areas these are longstanding issues that demand immediate priority and require detailed consideration.

"All in all, we believe that the current appetite for change provides us with an unprecedented opportunity to shape Australia's health system in ways which will benefit people in rural and remote areas," Dr May said.
