



NATIONAL RURAL
HEALTH
ALLIANCE INC.

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Health alliance supports call for increased rural focus

The National Rural Health Alliance has welcomed many of the key views outlined by AMA President Dr Andrew Pesce in his Press Club address earlier today. These included a call for strong government focus on rural health, a national plan for Indigenous Australians, an overhaul of Patient Assisted Travel Schemes (PATS) and a greater use of e-health.

“With the health reforms currently afoot, it is good that the government is being challenged to focus on the health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and rural Australians,” said Alliance Chair, Tamworth GP, Dr Jenny May.

“Health reform is only useful if it brings benefits to health consumers. Dr Pesce’s calls for an overhaul to the PATS scheme and a no-fault long term care scheme for people injured in accidents, provide very real hope for patients. These are initiatives we support because they really will help patients and their carers to access levels of care appropriate to their needs,” Dr May said.

“The Alliance’s work is founded on the belief that all Australians, wherever they live, should have access to comprehensive, high quality, accessible and appropriate health services, and opportunity for equivalent health outcomes. In rural Australia this is not always the case.

“There is an ongoing need for strategies for recruitment and retention of GPs and primary health care workers to work in rural and remote areas once they graduate.”

Dr May supported the call for the urgent introduction of e-health initiatives.

“Rural Australia is where new and innovative technology and information systems are likely to bring the greatest benefit, but where there is currently poorest capacity for its uptake. The Alliance is convinced electronic health records will bring wide-ranging benefits to the Australian community, particularly for patient safety and quality health outcomes,” she said.

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