



NATIONAL RURAL
HEALTH
ALLIANCE INC.

Media Release

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‘Interesting times’ for rural health

The 29 national organisations in the NRHA are meeting face-to-face in Canberra this weekend in a time of major opportunity for improved rural and remote health and wellbeing. The four-day meeting will provide greater clarity for parliamentarians from all sides about the priority actions for equity in health outcomes and in access to services for rural Australians.

A recent report from the National Institute of Industry and Economic Research showed that, on average, it costs rural residents five times as much to access essential services as it does metropolitan residents. This starkly illustrates the disparity faced by regional communities and the impediments regional Australia faces in attracting business and providing equivalent health and wellbeing.

The Alliance has offered to provide up-to-the-minute briefings to both major parties about health service access, workforce, infrastructure and telehealth issues currently affecting the Bush. Tony Windsor and his independent colleagues have expressed interest in receiving further reports on rural health issues from the Alliance and the opportunity for a meeting between representatives of the Alliance and the Independents is being pursued.

The Alliance will hold a media conference at 10 Campion Street in Deakin on Monday 30 August at 2:30pm at which, after three days of deliberation, it will report on the priorities for immediate action that should be pursued by the incoming government in the health area.

It is likely that the priorities will include policies for regional development and enhancing the sustainability of rural communities. In the health sector itself the Alliance members are likely to confirm the importance of continued health reform that will lead to a national system for local action and greater equity.

Other key issues for consideration this weekend by the Alliance include the parlous state of dental health and dental health services in rural and remote areas, e-health, and a guarantee of a fair share of hospital resources for rural areas. The challenge of a better distribution of doctors and other health professionals in rural and remote areas will also be discussed.

On Monday at the National Museum of Australia the Alliance is hosting a free public seminar on rural and regional infrastructure – which will include case studies on local infrastructure for health.

Further Contacts

Dr Jenny May - Chair: 0427 885 337

Marshall Wilson - Media: 0425 624 100