



NATIONAL RURAL
HEALTH
ALLIANCE INC.

Policy Portion 2003/1

Alliance on OTDs, Scholarships, Research and Lapsing Programs

At its initial meeting with Minister Tony Abbott on Tuesday 14 October 2003, Members of Council committed the Alliance to four key tasks.

Given the importance to rural and remote areas of Overseas Trained Doctors, the Alliance intends to work with government and other agencies for better ways to recruit, support and retain them.

The four-year programs in the Regional Health Strategy are currently being reviewed with a view to their being refunded in Budget 2004. The Alliance has contributed to the review and is keen to be involved in ongoing evaluation of the various programs. It is vital that the financial commitment to rural and remote health represented by these programs be retained.

The Alliance is a strong supporter of the scholarships for medical, nursing and allied health students, including for those from rural areas and those that are bonded to practice in areas of workforce need. A range of valuable education and support programs has resulted in more and more placements in rural areas. There needs to be more support for the various elements of a good placement system, including transport, accommodation, orientation and support for mentors.

The Alliance has called for a targeted rural health research program with the majority of its work to be undertaken in rural areas. This should include additional support for valuable rural work being undertaken in the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

17 October 2003

Visit 'Publications and News' at www.ruralhealth.org.au for all the Alliance's policy documents on rural and remote health.