



NATIONAL RURAL  
HEALTH  
ALLIANCE INC.



## National Injury Insurance Scheme: Motor Vehicle Accidents

Submission to the Treasury

May 2014

*This Submission is based on the views of the National Rural Health Alliance but may not reflect the full or particular views of all of its Member Bodies.*

## Introduction

The National Rural Health Alliance is comprised of 37 national organisations. It is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of the more than 6.7 million people in rural and remote Australia.

Members include rural consumer groups (such as the Country Women's Association of Australia and the Isolated Children's Parents' Association), representation from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector, rural and remote health professional organisations (representing doctors, nurses and midwives, allied health professionals, dentists, pharmacists, optometrists, paramedics, health students, chiropractors and health service managers) and rural service providers (such as the Royal Flying Doctor Service and Frontier Services of the Uniting Church in Australia). The full list of Member Bodies is available on the website at [www.ruralhealth.org.au](http://www.ruralhealth.org.au).

Each of the Member Bodies is represented on Council of the Alliance, which guides and informs policy development and submissions. With such a broad representative base, the Alliance is in a unique position to provide input on the broader issues relating to good health and wellbeing in rural and remote areas.

## The submission

The purpose of this submission is to ensure that consideration of a national injury insurance scheme for motor vehicle accidents comprehends the particular circumstances of people in rural and remote areas.

This submission is comprised of this brief cover note plus existing documents prepared by the Alliance for its work in relation to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The Alliance has a strong interest in the possibility of a National Injury Insurance Scheme (NIIS) and how it would improve the situation currently faced by people in rural and remote areas upon experiencing a motor vehicle accident, particularly in those jurisdictions currently without a no-fault scheme.

People living in rural and remote Australia who have incurred a catastrophic traumatic brain injury invariably obtain high quality acute medical attention in major metropolitan specialist hospitals. However, after acute management is concluded, and upon returning to their home communities, there is a dearth of capacity for continuing specialist brain injury rehabilitation in most states. NSW is the only jurisdiction which has been able to achieve a state-wide specialist service. This service model has a high degree of collaboration with the NSW Lifetime Care and Support Authority.

It is important that the continuing development of the NIIS reflects the need for rural and remote Australian to have equity of access to specialised services which focus on the cognitive, psychological, behavioural and physical aspects of brain injury rehabilitation. These services provide the strong base and support for successful re-entry to community and relationships, to employment, and to successful navigation for 'living with a changed life'.

We would ask relevant officers in Treasury to make themselves familiar with the facts, figures and opinions in the attached NRHA publications.

One of these documents is the NRHA Position Paper entitled *[Achieving best possible outcomes for people with acquired brain injury who live rural and remote communities](#)*. It briefly summarises the national situation with respect to acquired brain injury, particularly as it relates to rural and remote areas. The paper then suggests how it would be possible to effect an improved national approach to rural and remote brain injury rehabilitation and has a set of best practice principles for such work. The paper concludes with some broad recommendations.

The other NRHA papers we commend for Treasury's consideration are:

- The NRHA [Submission to the Senate Inquiry on the NDIS Bill 2012 \(1 February 2013\)](#).
- The NRHA's [Opening statement](#) to a public hearing of that Inquiry.
- The NRHA [Discussion Paper on issues relating to the NDIS in rural and remote areas of Australia \(21 February 2013\)](#).
- The NRHA [Submission to FaHCSIA on the proposed rules for the NDIS \(26 March 2013\)](#).
- The NRHA/NDCA report of a roundtable held in Canberra: [Implementation of DisabilityCare Australia in rural and remote areas \(May 2013\)](#).
- The [Final Report of the NRHA's FaHCSIA Practical Design Fund Project \(7 June 2013\)](#).

The National Rural Health Alliance has an ongoing interest in potential developments with a National Injury Insurance Scheme and would be pleased to be involved in further consultations.