MEDIA RELEASE

Peak Rural Health Advocate Refunded by Federal Grant

The National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA) has received a major boost with the announcement of continued support under the Commonwealth Government’s Rural Health Support, Education and Training (RHSET) Program.

The NRHA has been working for three years to improve health outcomes for non-metropolitan people and the health services to which they have access. The Alliance brings together practical information from the providers and consumers of rural health services and passes this on to a wide range of agencies involved with health.

Sue Wade, Chairperson of the NRHA, welcomed the decision by Dr Wooldridge to provide support through RHSET for the continued operation of the Alliance.

“Rural and regional people are hoping that their voices will be clearly heard by governments and that attention will be paid in particular to the need to improve health services to their communities. There is a feeling of gloom in many rural areas because of continued unemployment, the relative lack of services and opportunities, and fears that the current spate of rationalisation by some governments may be making things worse.

“There are many difficulties involved in ensuring that country people have good health and good access to health services,” said Ms Wade. “They include the need for education, training and support programs for rural health professionals, and for rural people to have more information on rural health which is easy to access and understand.

“The whole community is also aware of the continuing difficulty of improving health among our indigenous peoples, a large proportion of whom live in rural and remote areas. Mental health and care of the elderly are other matters of great importance in rural areas,” Ms Wade said.

“With the support recently announced by the Government the Alliance will continue to bring together the views of interest groups working on and involved with rural health. This information helps managers, health researchers and the Federal, State and NT health administrations whose staff would otherwise need to consult separately with the eighteen Member Bodies which make up the Alliance.

“We welcome the chance given us to work with the new Federal Government on matters of common interest and common concern”, Ms Wade said.

Further information, interviews:  Sue Wade: (015) 268 834
                                   Gordon Gregory: (06) 285 4660