



NATIONAL RURAL  
HEALTH  
ALLIANCE INC.

## Budget Reply Media Release

14 May 2004

### **ALP's continued support for dental services is welcome**

The Alliance welcomes Mark Latham's continued commitment to "a national dental program - - for aged pensioners and health card holders".

The Alliance has consistently drawn attention to the dreadful state of oral and dental health – and to the facts that the disease itself is preventable and that policies relating to it could be led by the Australian Government.

Many people in rural and remote areas miss out on oral and dental treatment. Worst of all is the state of oral and dental health among Indigenous people, particularly in more remote areas. The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA) have recently written to Health Minister Tony Abbott seeking a commitment that the new dental initiative in MedicarePlus will give priority attention to Indigenous patients. Over 69,000 dental care plans will be covered and the Alliance believes that a substantial proportion of these should be for Indigenous patients.

Mark Latham's Budget reply speech, like the Treasurer's, was silent on Indigenous disadvantage.

**Further information:** Gordon Gregory, Executive Director

02 6285 4660