



...good health and wellbeing in rural and remote Australia

MEDIA RELEASE

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Smart cities need strong, healthy regions

The National Rural Health Alliance is disappointed that the Federal Budget fails to address the under-expenditure on rural health, which is in the order of \$2 billion per year.

Kim Webber, CEO of the National Rural Health Alliance said, “The last significant investment in rural health was the half a billion dollar investment in a comprehensive rural health strategy more than 16 years ago. Since then, successive Federal Budgets have missed the opportunity to provide a fair share of health services to Australia’s rural and remote population.”

“Rural Australia is not requesting MORE money per capita than what is spent in the city, merely the same amount with flexibility to allow us to implement innovative models which work for rural and remote communities.”

The Budget prioritised a Smart Cities Plan that aims to foster partnerships between the Federal Government, state governments and city governments.

The National Rural Health Alliance urges the Government to also include rural and remote areas in its national agenda. The Smart Cities approach could be used to invest in the health and wellbeing of the almost 7 million people who live in rural and remote Australia. Economically, our rural and remote communities are the powerhouse of Australia contributing through the mining, agriculture, tourism and energy sectors.

We need a clear vision for the growth and development of rural and remote Australia that broadens the employment base, builds in long-term investment in health and education and capitalises on the potential for growth in emerging technologies.

“Attracting people to rural and remote communities for jobs and opportunities will also open up more affordable housing and great lifestyle options. But people will not come and stay in rural and remote Australia if we do not have accessible health services. We need to ensure that health funding is flexible enough to enable new models of service delivery in rural and remote Australia” Kim Webber said.

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The National Rural Health Alliance is Australia’s peak non-government organisation for rural and remote health. Its vision is good health and wellbeing in rural and remote Australia.