

# Friends OF THE ALLIANCE



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

Friends of the Alliance is a membership body that supports the work of the National Rural Health Alliance.



### What is Friends?

Friends of the Alliance is a network of individuals and organisations that support the work of the National Rural Health Alliance. Membership is through a modest membership fee and is open to individuals and organisations interested in health issues in rural and remote Australia.

*Friends* provides the Alliance with grassroots connections to current issues affecting health and wellbeing in rural and remote areas. This information adds value to the views of the Alliance's member bodies and of the 10,000 people with whom the Alliance maintains contact.

### Where did Friends come from?

Friends of the Alliance was the brainchild of Michael Bishop, one of the key allied health professionals in the establishment of the Alliance. First formed in 1999, *Friends* was conceived as a group of individuals and organisations wanting a special relationship with the Alliance. Through *Friends* it would be possible for people to express their support for the Alliance's vision and, if they want it, to have direct involvement in the Alliance's policy work.

Over time *Friends* has grown in strength and purpose and is now an established part of the Alliance's operations.

### Friends with benefits

Many people and agencies join *Friends* to demonstrate their commitment to improving health and wellbeing for people in rural and remote areas. All members are encouraged to provide input to the Alliance's policy work, which benefits from being informed by the practical and contemporary views *Friends* can bring.

Those who want even closer engagement can nominate to be State or Territory representatives on the *Friends* Advisory Committee. The Chair of that Committee is elected by its members and sits on Council of the Alliance.

All members of *Friends* are entitled to discounted registration to the biennial National Rural Health Conference. They also receive a copy of the Alliance's rural and remote health papers DVD. This is a comprehensive collection of conference and research papers on rural and remote health that have been published since 1991.

The NRHA website provides direct links to the home pages of organisational members of *Friends*.

### The Friends Advisory Committee

Two members of the organisation from each jurisdiction are elected to the Advisory Committee for a period of two years. The current members are listed on the Alliance website.

Supported by staff of the Alliance, the *Friends* Advisory Committee takes the lead in managing activities and initiatives of *Friends*. Some of the *Friends* activities are associated with the biennial Conference and include the Unsung Hero award and a poetry and/or photographic competition. The winning entries in these competitions (2007, 2009 and 2011) have been published on the Alliance website.

Members of *Friends* are also encouraged to contribute articles, photographs and poetry for publication in Partyline, the NRHA's quarterly newsletter.

### HOW TO JOIN:

*Friends* membership is open to individuals and organisations interested in health issues in rural and remote Australia. For more information and to download a membership form, go to [www.ruralhealth.org.au](http://www.ruralhealth.org.au)