



15<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL  
RURAL HEALTH  
CONFERENCE  
*Better together!*

24-27 MARCH 2019  
Hotel Grand Chancellor  
Hobart, Tasmania



NATIONAL RURAL  
HEALTH  
ALLIANCE LTD

Wednesday 27 March 2019

## Rural health conference calls for urgent action in rural and remote communities on eve of federal election

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health inequality is the most pressing health issue facing Australia, according to over 1100 delegates at the 15<sup>th</sup> National Rural Health Conference.

The conference identified priorities for an incoming government on the eve of a federal election including:

- The conference delegates endorsed the Uluru Statement from the Heart and called on all political parties and federal, state and territory governments to endorse the Uluru Statement and commit to truth telling to eradicate discrimination, racism and improve health and wellbeing
- Urgent continued funding to expand Aboriginal controlled comprehensive primary health care services
- Greater investment in training, support and career pathways for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce
- Fund the rollout of rural generalist positions across all health professions
- Urgently address the determinants of health and wellbeing by eradicating the disease of poverty that is higher in rural and remote communities. Reform of taxation and welfare policies including an increase in the Newstart Allowance and the provision of stable housing for all
- Create a National Sustainable Development Unit to align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Invest in a national climate health and wellbeing strategy acknowledging the serious risk to health posed by climate change
- Develop an integrated primary health care system and maximise the use of MBS funding in rural and remote communities
- Take urgent action to address and implement strategies to end the unacceptable number of Indigenous deaths caused by suicide in remote and rural communities
- Take urgent action to invest at least the same level of funding that has been directed to addressing the recruitment and retention of locally trained GPs to the other health professions that are necessary in providing comprehensive health care to people in rural, regional and remote Australia
- Invest in capital projects to upgrade the NBN so rural and remote communities can access online health care services

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Delegates welcome funding commitments from Minister McKenzie of \$62 million for the roll out of GP rural generalist training and Shadow Minister Catherine King's commitment to provide \$12 million in Telehealth to bridge the gap in stroke health in rural and remote communities.

**Media Enquiries**

Catherine Beadnell

0488 528 472

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