



NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH ALLIANCE: Key priorities

We call on the Government to make these priorities the remit of the Rural Health Commissioner, with relevant key performance indicators developed to report progress. We call on the re-establishment of the COAG Rural Health Committee to lead improved integration and report on cross-jurisdictional activities.

- 1. *Unlock the economic and social value of the 7 million people living in regional, rural and remote Australia by reducing the gap in health and wellbeing outcomes compared with people living in cities.***
 - This will dramatically improve participation and productivity, and increase Australia's economic growth.
- 2. *Introduce incentives to support getting the right workforce into rural and remote areas – work on distribution incentives rather than simply supply, particularly for allied health professionals and nurses and midwives.***
 - Focusing on workforce incentives to attract and retain valuable health professionals in rural and remote areas would pay for itself through increased productivity and economic growth, driven by healthier rural and remote residents.
- 3. *Improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, which worsens with increasing remoteness.***
 - We need greater focus on improving child health, education, and wellbeing and to support indigenous families to give them the best start in life. It should involve a holistic early childhood strategy which informs high quality, locally responsive and culturally appropriate programs with stable, long term funding.
- 4. *Support the 15 Primary Health Networks covering rural and remote communities to make a real impact on rural and remote health outcomes***
 - The Alliance applauds the fact that the Government has used a weighted population formula in distributing funds to the PHNs. And they need long-term contracts to attract quality staff and ensure certainty for communities.
- 5. *The Alliance supports the best start in life for mothers and babies, focusing on the first 1000 days – from conception to the age of two.***
 - The Alliance believes that the best investment in the long term health and wellbeing of children, Australia's future, is in ensuring they have the best possible start in life.
 - We should build on the First 1000 Days program, which targets Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as an exemplar program to support women and children across all communities.