



May 15, 2019

Rural voters left in dark on health: NRHA

With just four days left to vote in the Federal election, Australia's peak body for rural, regional and remote health says there is no clear policy winner when it comes to promises for improving the health of people living outside capital cities.

"We've had bits and pieces announced but none of the major parties have summarized clearly and comprehensively how they plan to tackle the shameful gap in health outcomes between metropolitan and rural Australia," National Rural Health Alliance CEO Mark Diamond says.

"The closest we have is a Greens' stakeholder statement on rural health and we congratulate the Greens for endeavouring to summarise their policies and for taking rural health seriously enough to do this.

"The Coalition's rural health policy got six lines in its health plan document and Labor's got 15 lines. That's not to say both parties don't have plans for rural health. They do but it is difficult to glean in one document how much of the billions of dollars they plan to spend on health will go to improving rural, regional and remote health services and keeping country people well. We think that's worth articulating."

To help rural voters decide which party to support, the NRHA has compared the major parties' policies against its priorities for improving rural health services, access and affordability which include

- Improving the health of Indigenous Australians
- Boosting the supply and distribution of allied health care workers in rural, regional and remote areas
- Creating a greater research focus on factors affecting rural health; and,
- Developing a new National Rural Health Strategy

The comparison can be viewed at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/election19>.

Media Enquiries: Mark Diamond, Chief Executive Officer, 0428 817 090