

Rural Health Matters this election!



Where the parties stand
on our key priorities



1. Improve Indigenous Health

NRHA POLICY	LNP	ALP	GREENS
<p>Endorse the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the Makarrata, ie establish a First Nations Voice in the Australian Constitution and establish a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history</p>	<p>Is committed to recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in the Constitution, which would acknowledge a shared history and value our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.</p> <p>The Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition’s final report notes further work is required to clarify what a voice is and how it could best suit the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.</p> <p>No commitment on Makarrata.</p>	<p>Will establish a Voice for First Nations people and create a referendum on enshrining that Voice in the Constitution. Will work with the First Nations people to establish a Makarrata Commission on agreement-making and truth-telling.</p>	<p>Will implement a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament and establish a path to treaties.</p> <p>Greens support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.</p>
<p>Fund an additional 3000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners. (\$180 million over 4 years; \$180 million per year ongoing)</p>	<p>No specific allocation.</p> <p>\$4.1 billion over four years via Indigenous Australians Health Program to improve access to health care + \$51 million for new initiatives including increasing the number of Indigenous Australians working in health.</p>	<p>No specific allocation.</p> <p>Increase the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all levels of the health workforce, aiming to achieve parity across all professions.</p>	<p>No specific allocation.</p> <p>National strategy on chronic kidney disease including \$4 million to educate and train Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce.</p> <p>\$23.7 million to address shortage in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives, including \$1 million to develop a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nursing Workforce Strategy and \$12.54 million over 3</p>

			years for 95 places for Indigenous nursing students to study for 3 years.
Increase base funding of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations	\$8 million for National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services to deliver culturally appropriate health care in very remote areas. No increase.	Commitment to funding security for ACCHOs (announced as part of Indigenous initiatives). Will review ACCHOs' funding agreements.	No specific funding Develop strategic plan to build capacity of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health services.
Eliminate Rheumatic Heart Disease. Get serious about meeting targets set under the END RHD program. (\$170 million over 4 years.)	\$35 million to accelerate development of a vaccine to prevent Rheumatic Heart Disease.	\$33 million for vaccine to prevent Rheumatic Heart Disease.	No specific funding allocated.

2. Improve access to healthcare, especially by funding more allied health professionals into rural Australia

NRHA POLICY	LNP	ALP	GREENS
<p>Fund an additional 3000 Allied Health Professionals (\$300 million over 4 years)</p>	<p>No real policy on boosting allied health other than expanding eligibility criteria under Workforce Incentive Program (not rurally focused) which rebrands previous practice nurse incentive program.</p> <p>\$19.7 million for Royal far West to expand Telecare services including allied health services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy and psychology.</p>	<p>No target or specific policy.</p> <p>Expand the health workforce where shortages exist by educating and training more doctors, nurses, midwives, allied health professionals and community and health support workers.</p> <p>Facilitate research to identify and address gaps in allied health service delivery, particularly in regional, rural and remote communities.</p> <p>Will create a dedicated Commonwealth Chief Allied Health Officer role to coordinate national workforce strategies and support the role of allied health professionals in the health system.</p>	<p>Investigate expanding professional pathways.</p>
<p>Fund 20 rural and remote demonstration sites across the nation, comprising clusters of rural communities, where a workforce is matched with the healthcare needs of each, then evaluate these for improvements in service access and</p>	<p>No specific promise.</p>	<p>No specific promise.</p>	<p>Develop a rural health workforce innovation fund (\$10 million/year for 3 years) – for community organisations to develop locally suitable workforce solutions.</p> <p>Invest in the development of national minimum standards for service access in rural and regional areas.</p>

<p>health outcomes over a sustained period. These demonstration sites then inform the development of service models best suited to meeting the needs of local communities (\$50 million over 4 years)</p>			
<p>Establish a community grants program to ensure people in rural and remote areas have reliable continuous access to digital infrastructure and technologies capable of supporting telehealth, tele-medicine, tele-rehabilitation and tele-monitoring (\$400 million over 4 years)</p>	<p>No specific promise for community grants program.</p> <p>\$160 million for 2 more rounds of the Mobile Black Spot Program.</p> <p>\$60 million for a Regional Connectivity Program.</p> <p>Funding for trials of alternative voice services to replace ageing high capacity radio concentrator network in remote areas.</p>	<p>No specific promise for community grants program.</p> <p>\$160 million for 2 more rounds of the Mobile Black Spot Program.</p> <p>\$60 million for local projects to address regional connectivity issues and identify priorities for investment in local connectivity projects and digital literacy initiatives including in remote Indigenous communities.</p> <p>Work with the States and Territories to better coordinate investment.</p> <p>Ensure rail and road projects include communications coverage.</p> <p>Develop more accurate and comparable mobile coverage maps.</p> <p>Improve remote Indigenous communications and broadcasting.</p>	<p>No specific promise for community grants program.</p> <p>\$45 million for very remote, remote and outer regional communities to build infrastructure capabilities to better use telehealth technologies.</p>

		\$12 million for a National Telestroke Network, linking 41 regional and rural emergency departments to metropolitan stroke specialists via telehealth technology.	
Provide Medicare rebates to GPs and other health professionals for telehealth consults to outer regional, remote and very remote areas (\$420 million over 4 years and \$180 million/year thereafter)	<p>\$33.5 million to extend telehealth services provided by GPs to remote and very remote patients.</p> <p>Telehealth access for psychological services for people living in Northern and Western Queensland impacted by the recent floods, those affected by fires in Tasmania and drought affected farmers in the Gippsland region will receive access to additional mental health support including through telehealth with an investment of \$26.9 million. Amount specifically for telehealth access unknown.</p>	No specific policy.	<p>\$180 million for infrastructure and increased Medical Benefits Schedule (MBS) over 3 years to increase access to health services in rural and regional areas.</p> <p>Including \$45 million in year one for very remote, remote and outer regional communities to build infrastructure capabilities to better use telehealth technologies, \$45 million in year 2 and \$90 million in year 3 for people in very remote, remote and outer regional areas for GP and allied health consultations via telehealth.</p> <p>\$90 million ongoing for people in very remote, remote and regional areas for GP and allied health services via telehealth.</p> <p>Investigate increasing rural and remote bulk-billing incentive payment.</p>

3. Expand the health research capacity of rural Australia

NRHA POLICY	LNP	ALP	GREENS
<p>Create a new and specifically funded rural health focus in the Medical Research Future Fund, (a third Mission) specifically for Rural Health, and allocate 28 % of the fund to this (\$360m)</p>	<p>\$100 million for rural, regional and remote clinical trials across the country from the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) National Critical Infrastructure initiative over 5 years from 2020-21.</p> <p>\$18 million for a new Institute for Regional, Rural and Remote Health and Medical Research in Orange NSW to support the needs of rural communities throughout Australia.</p> <p>\$10 million for the Lowitja Institute for research to improve the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</p>	<p>Establish a review into research in Australia.</p> <p>No specific promises for rural health research.</p>	<p>No specific promises on rural health research.</p>

4. Create a new National Rural Health Strategy

NRHA POLICY	LNP	ALP	GREENS
<p>Create a new National Rural Health Strategy (\$2m) that includes targets for improving access to health services, health promotion and for improving social determinants of health for rural people</p>	<p>No new strategy planned. Already has <i>Stronger Rural Health Strategy</i> – 2018 Budget (\$550m).</p>	<p>Develop a National Rural Health Strategy.</p>	<p>Develop a new national Rural Health Strategy.</p> <p>Develop minimum standards for service access.</p>

This table refers specifically to the key focuses set out in the [NRHA's 2019 Election Charter](#).

For general party policies on rural health, see full election platforms at:

Coalition - <https://www.liberal.org.au/our-policies>

See the Coalition's statement on rural and regional health at <https://www.liberal.org.au/our-plan/health>

Labor - https://www.alp.org.au/media/1539/2018_alp_national_platform_constitution.pdf.

Labor's statement on regional, rural and remote health at Pages 141-142

The Greens - <https://greens.org.au> (See Greens stakeholder statement on rural health at: https://www.ruralhealth.org.au/sites/default/files/Greens_Rural%20health.pdf)