



NATIONAL RURAL  
HEALTH  
ALLIANCE INC.



Mr Steve Sterling  
General Manager  
Single Business Service & CRC Programmes  
Department of Industry, Innovation and Science  
GPO Box 9839  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Sterling

### **Cooperative Research Centre priorities**

The National Rural Health Alliance (the Alliance) welcomes the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions for future Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) priorities.

The Alliance is comprised of 38 national member organisations covering more than 250,000 individual members and a further 450 organisational members. We are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all people living in regional and remote Australia<sup>1</sup>. Our members include consumer groups, representation from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector, health professional organisations (representing doctors, nurses, midwives, allied health professionals, dentists, optometrists, paramedics and health service managers) and health service providers. A full list of Alliance members is at [Attachment A](#).

The Alliance has identified that one of the most significant drivers to improve health and wellbeing in regional and remote communities is through unlocking the economic and social value of the 7 million people who live outside Australia's major cities. The Alliance believes this is also the key to improving health and wellbeing – particularly for people living in remote communities, who have some of the worst health outcomes of all Australians.

CRCs will be vital in addressing the issues small regional and remote communities face as they seek to transition their local economies following the resources boom and embed systems that will drive future growth and prosperity. The Alliance believes that these communities must be at the heart of this development activity with expert support to help them identify and prioritise their future options.

CRCs will have an important role to play in identifying areas of future growth potential and supporting the transition of communities addressing these challenges. The Alliance believes that there is an urgent need for better access to data to support the development

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this submission, references to remoteness are based on ASGC-RA, in which category 1 is Major cities, 2 is Inner regional areas, 3 Outer regional, 4 Remote and 5 Very remote. In the submission, references to "regional areas" mean Inner plus Outer regional; and references to "remote areas" mean Remote plus Very remote.

of policies and to plan for growth and development throughout regional and remote Australia.

The Alliance believes that one of the priorities of CRCs into the future should be in working with smaller communities to identify future areas of growth potential and make use of existing infrastructure and technology in innovative ways.

Smaller communities are concerned that there are no job or educational opportunities for young people, resulting in young people either electing to leave the community, or deciding not to pursue their dreams. Developing ways to pursue education and training close to home should be an aspiration that CRCs should be able to support and develop.

CRCs based in regional and remote communities should also support the uptake of technology and drive access to affordable and accessible broadband that can enable better practice across community economies.

The Alliance strongly supports the role of CRCs in leading research and innovation in Australia. We believe that future priorities of the CRC Programme should include identifying models to transition smaller regional and remote communities from resources based economies to more broadly based economies that are sustainable over the long term.

A second priority area could be to explore, develop and support flexible models of human service provision that are adaptable to the changing needs of smaller regional and remote communities.

The National Rural Health Alliance is pleased to provide input for consideration. Identifying the future priorities for CRCs will support regional and remote communities as they strive to adapt and change and transition to a viable long-term economy. The will be happy to provide additional information and support as required.

Yours sincerely



David Butt  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
10 March 2017

## Attachment A

<b>National Rural Health Alliance - Member Body Organisations</b>
Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (Rural, Regional and Remote Committee)
Australasian College of Health Service Management (rural members)
Australian College of Midwives (Rural and Remote Advisory Committee)
Australian College of Nursing - Rural Nursing and Midwifery Community of Interest
Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
Australian General Practice Network
Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association
Allied Health Professions Australia Rural and Remote
Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association
Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (rural nursing and midwifery members)
Australian Physiotherapy Association (Rural Members Network)
Australian Paediatric Society
Australian Psychological Society (Rural and Remote Psychology Interest Group)
Australian Rural Health Education Network
Council of Ambulance Authorities (Rural and Remote Group)
Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives
CRANApus
Country Women's Association of Australia
Exercise and Sports Science Australia (Rural and Remote Interest Group)
Federation of Rural Australian Medical Educators
Indigenous Allied Health Australia
Isolated Children's Parents' Association
National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Association
National Rural Health Student Network
Paramedics Australasia (Rural and Remote Special Interest Group)
Rural Special Interest Group of Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
RACGP Rural: The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
Rural Doctors Association of Australia
Rural Dentists' Network of the Australian Dental Association
Royal Far West
Royal Flying Doctor Service
Rural Health Workforce Australia
Rural and Indigenous Health-interest Group of the Chiropractors' Association of Australia
Rural Optometry Group of Optometry Australia
Rural Pharmacists Australia
Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health
Speech Pathology Australia (Rural and Remote Member Community)