

**2 November 2022**

## **Immediate solutions needed for rural communities to combat climate challenges**

The National Rural Health Alliance (the Alliance) is deeply concerned by the severe floods experienced across New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania and expresses sympathy to the rural, regional and remote communities affected by them.

“The Alliance is concerned about the impact the inclement weather will have on rural and urban centres and their communities, including food shortages, price hikes, airborne disease and logistics delay in the transport of goods,” said the Alliance CEO Susi Tegen.

“Communities are already challenged by global post-COVID consequences and effects of the war in Ukraine, which has increased resource and fuel prices as well as fertiliser and other farming inputs to a certain extent,” Ms Tegen added.

“We are concerned for rural communities, considering the social and economic costs. The ripple effect it causes to the greater and urban community is also significant,” she said.

“Rural industries, including agriculture, mining, tourism, manufacturing and retail services, all contribute a major part of Australia’s GDP and the current and significant change in weather patterns will severely affect these industries, causing nationwide challenges,” Ms Tegen said.

Rural and remote people make up 30 per cent of the population and have helped keep Australia out of two global financial crises.

“Rural Australia is our food source and ensures our general wellbeing. However, it is concerning that they receive less in health and other services than their contribution and population deserves,” said Ms Tegen.

“We need to acknowledge the pain and efforts of our rural farmers in adopting sustainable practices to manage the environment. Yet, globally, they are the least-subsidised primary industry.

“The Alliance calls for action from government, health and medical services, and others working directly and indirectly in rural Australia, to implement short- and long-term solutions to the impact of climate change faced by rural communities, and it must be addressed with cultural and social sensitivity,” said Ms Tegen.

She also emphasised that it will be important that the people on the ground are not given lip service and delayed solutions.

Ends.

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