

**8 November 2019**

### **Digital health the focus at NBN workshop**

The National Rural Health Alliance, the peak body for rural and remote health in Australia, co-hosted a digital health workshop today with the NBN in Sydney.

CEO Dr Gabrielle O’Kane said that the workshop, which was attended by Minister for Communications Paul Fletcher, brought together key stakeholders including health practitioners, advocates and consumers.

“Digital health is key to delivering quality health care services to people in rural Australia in the 21st century,” said Dr O’Kane. “But while digital health provides many opportunities for practitioners and consumers, there are still significant challenges to overcome.”

“That’s why today’s workshop brought together people from across the sector who have an interest in digital health.

“There is lots of innovation happening in this space. But there are also many barriers that stand in the way, including poor connectivity and lack of affordability. Service designs need to fit the diverse needs of the 7 million people living in rural and remote Australia, and not just those in the major cities.

“It’s heartening that the Minister, Paul Fletcher, attended the workshop and indicated that the Federal Government was committed to improving digital health connectivity. The rural health sector will continue to work with the Minister and the Government to make sure that happens.

“There is important work taking place, such as My Health Record, but more needs to be done to ensure that people in rural Australia are included and have the same access to quality health services as people in the major cities.

“We need national coordination and collaboration in order to improve quality health care for people in the bush. The National Rural Health Alliance will continue to work with government to make this happen and today’s digital health workshop was an important first step.”

Media enquiries: Tim Hurd 0447 427 292 | [tim@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:tim@ruralhealth.org.au)