Rural health conference in Darwin declared a major success

Following four days of keynote addresses, paper presentations, a vibrant arts and health program, and countless conversations, delegates declared the 13th National Rural Health Conference a major success. The enthusiasm, dedication and passion of delegates and presenters for better rural health was evident from the opening session, and continued right through to today’s closing. It was abundantly clear that the possibilities are endless for better health and wellbeing in rural and remote Australia because of the commitment and ingenuity of the people who live and work in these places.

In his video message to the Conference, the Prime Minister said that all Australians should have fair access to health services wherever they live. He reminded delegates of the government’s commitment to closing the gap for Indigenous Australians, and that “we need the right people with the right skills, where they are needed”.

Gordon Gregory, CEO of the National Rural Health Alliance said that the 13th National Rural Health Conference was a success for one very important reason – it celebrates rural and remote life.

“For four days in Darwin, people from across Australia have come together and shared their stories and professional knowledge”, he said. “In addition, they have also shared and expressed their pride in the work they do and the rural and remote communities in which they live. Even though there are health challenges, which we are working to rectify, we were reminded that rural and remote Australia is a great place to live, that offer a great lifestyle with many benefits”.

Delegates were also presented with the priority policy recommendations, as voted and agreed by them, by the Convenor of the Recommendations Group. The top three priorities for rural and remote health from the 13th National Rural Health Conference were: a Senate Inquiry on food security in more remote areas; an integrated alcohol and other drugs service network that addresses issues with alcohol, smoking and other drugs; and a workforce summit to be convened by Senator Fiona Nash to look at the whole raft of issues that impact on the supply of health professionals in rural and remote areas.

For a full review of Conference events, streamed presentations, policy recommendations and much more visit www.ruralhealth.org.au/13nrhc

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