

THE NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH ALLIANCE LTD



... healthy and sustainable rural, regional and remote communities

The vision of the National Rural Health Alliance, as the peak non-government rural health organisation, is healthy and sustainable rural, regional and remote communities.



The Alliance

The National Rural Health Alliance is Australia's peak non-government organisation for rural health. It brings together a diversity of voices from around Australia for the common purpose of improving the health of people who live and work in country areas.

The Alliance currently comprises **43 members**, each of which is a national organisation. They represent health consumers, healthcare professionals, service providers, health educators, students and the Indigenous health sector.

The Alliance's broad representative base places it in a unique position to collect and disseminate information, determine key issues that affect health and wellbeing in rural areas, and provide a breadth of vision on rural health matters to governments, educational and research institutions, and other professional bodies.

Among its regular contributions to rural health is management of the biennial National Rural Health Conference and of the *Australian Journal of Rural Health*. The Alliance produces a range of policy documents on various health issues, makes submissions to government, engages with the media on topics relating to rural health, and advocates for better health outcomes for rural Australians.

Fundamental to the Alliance's work is the belief that all Australians, wherever they live, should have access to comprehensive, high-quality, accessible and appropriate health services, and every opportunity for equivalent health outcomes.

The Alliance takes a broad view of health and a long-term view of the development of rural Australia. It supports initiatives that will contribute to the sustainability of the diverse communities of rural Australia as healthy and health-promoting places in which to live and work. For these reasons it places a high value on strong partnerships among individuals, groups, organisations and all levels of government for the improved health of people in non-metropolitan areas.

Core support for the Alliance is provided by the Australian Government Department of Health. The Alliance's members engage with its work through its **Council** – the key agency in the credibility and effectiveness of the organisation. Council is supported by **Friends of the Alliance** and a wide network of contacts and relationships.

Rural health

On average, people who live in rural areas have shorter lives and higher levels of disease and injury than those in major cities. This is because rural people have poorer access to and use of health services when compared to urban Australians. Rural people also have, on average, lower income, less educational and employment opportunities, as well as lifestyle differences.

Australia-wide evidence shows that:

- the health of rural people is poorer than that of their city counterparts
- accessing primary care, dental care, allied health and specialist services is more difficult and, in many areas, requires greater time and expense on travel and accommodation
- shortages of health professionals, including doctors, allied health professionals, pharmacists and dentists, become more pronounced with remoteness
- the health of Indigenous people living in rural areas is significantly worse than that of their non-Indigenous counterparts
- the viability of many rural hospitals is uncertain and there has been a serious loss of capacity for maternity services and other procedural care in rural areas
- it is difficult to attract and retain health professionals in rural areas, particularly those who study and train in metropolitan areas
- infrastructure in rural areas for health services and health-related activity is limited and being further eroded by a lack of ongoing investment.

Alliance members

The Alliance will work with its members to:

- identify priority needs in rural health
- promote policies and initiatives to government to support rural health
- research key issues in rural health and develop knowledge about them
- disseminate relevant information and knowledge to those with an interest in rural health
- provide feedback to governments on the health impacts of their policies and services in rural communities
- develop strategic alliances with other groups that have the potential to improve rural health outcomes
- undertake resourced project and contract work that supports its vision.

Alliance members	
AHPARR	Allied Health Professions Australia (Rural and Remote Committee)
ACEM (RRRC)	Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (Rural, Regional and Remote Committee)
ACHSM (RRRSIG)	Australasian College of Health Service Management (Regional, Rural and Remote Special Interest Group)
ACP	Australasian College of Paramedicine
ANZCA FPM	Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists and Faculty of Pain Medicine
ACA (ARRPN)	Australian Chiropractors Association (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Rural and Remote Practitioner Network)
ACM (RRAC)	Australian College of Midwives (Rural and Remote Advisory Committee)
ACN (RNMCOI)	Australian College of Nursing (Rural Nursing and Midwifery Community of Interest)
ACRRM	Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
ADA (RDN)	Australian Dental Association (Rural Dentists' Network)
AGPAL	Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited
AHHA	Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association
AIDA	Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association
ANMF	Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (rural members)
APS	Australian Paediatric Society
APA (RAC)	Australian Physiotherapy Association (Rural Advisory Council)
APS (RRPIG)	Australian Psychological Society (Rural and Remote Psychology Interest Group)
ARHEN	Australian Rural Health Education Network
CATSINaM	Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives
CAA	Council of Ambulance Authorities
CRANaplus	CRANaplus

Organisational structure

Council is made up of one representative from each Alliance member, plus the Chair of Friends of the Alliance. Council provides members with the opportunity to engage on an equal footing in selecting the issues on which the Alliance's information and policy work focuses and in developing the organisation's views.

Board directors are elected by the Council membership. To be eligible for election as a director of the Alliance they may be a director, member, member representative or employee of an Alliance member.

The Alliance has a Secretariat in Canberra that assists in managing governance and coordinates the work of Council, Board, Friends and other committees.

ESSA	Exercise and Sports Science Australia
FRAME	Federation of Rural Australian Medical Educators
ICPA	Isolated Children's Parents' Association
NACCHO	National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
NAATSIHWP	National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners
NRHSN	National Rural Health Student Network
OA (ROG)	Optometry Australia (Rural Optometry Group)
PSA (RSIG)	Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Rural Special Interest Group)
RMSA	Regional Medical Specialists Association
RACMA	Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators
RACS (RSS)	Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (Rural Surgery Section)
RANZCOG	Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
RANZCP	Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
RACGP Rural	Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (Rural Faculty)
RFW	Royal Far West
RFDS	Royal Flying Doctor Service
RDAA	Rural Doctors Association of Australia
RHWA	Rural Health Workforce Australia
RPA	Rural Pharmacists Australia
SARRAH	Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health
SHPA	Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia
SPA (RRMC)	Speech Pathology Australia (Rural and Remote Member Community)