

26 September 2024

Media Release

Australians asked to exercise their right to petition for a healthier rural Australia

Australians from across the country are being asked to exercise their right to sign a petition to the Federal Government to ensure a healthier rural Australia, by the National Rural Health Alliance.

The petition calls for a 10-year National Rural Health Strategy which ensures federal and state governments and territories make an agreement to ensure rural Australia receives better healthcare access. Currently, rural people receive less access to health care and spend less on their health care per person than those who live in the cities.

Every Australian citizen is being called on to join with the National Rural Health Alliance and sign this petition to the House of Representatives. It will let politicians know that Australia needs improved rural health care and ensure that every person, regardless of their location and postcode, has access to the quality care they deserve.

To sign the petition, click [here](#). Signatures can be collected until 10 October 2024.

“Nearly 7 million Australians living and working outside of cities are being denied the basic human right to health care and wellbeing and are dying 12 to 16 years younger than their urban counterparts,” said Alliance Chief Executive Susi Tegen.

“This petition underscores that rural health has been neglected in policy, budgets and priority settings for too long and that Commonwealth and State investments and policies are neither coordinated nor sustained.

“Rural Australians make up 30 per cent of the Australian population, bring in two-thirds of Australia’s export earnings, 50 per cent of tourism income and produce over 90 per cent of Australia’s food. Yet, governments spend \$848 less per person, per year, on the health of a person living rurally than someone who lives in the city,” Ms Tegen added. The Alliance’s three-point plan for building a healthier future for rural Australia includes:

- A National Rural Health Strategy under the National Health Reform Agreement to coordinate Commonwealth, State and Territory investment, policy and service delivery for rural Australia to be funded through
- A \$1billion National Rural Health Fund for blended health delivery payments and infrastructure for rural communities where they have difficulty attracting and retaining the health workforce they need and where costs are higher for rural businesses. This makes it more difficult to access health services when needed and to receive care that can help prevent more serious illness.

supported by

- Long-term funding of the National Rural Health Alliance to work as the enabler and conduit between communities, grassroots clinicians, entities and Governments and specific funding for a Rural Health Innovation and Evidence Hub, hosted by the Alliance to learn and share the lessons from rural innovation across Australia.

Learn more about the petition [here](#).

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