



NATIONAL RURAL  
HEALTH  
ALLIANCE INC.

**9<sup>th</sup> National Rural Health Conference**  
**Albury, 7-10 March 2007**

## **Media Release**

**Date 7 March 2007**

### **Health Reform, Health Professionals and Service Planning**

The second day of the 9<sup>th</sup> National Rural Health Conference, Thursday 8 March, will focus on health reform and its potential impact on health services on the ground in rural and remote areas. Six keynote speakers will provide views on how national reform can improve outcomes in areas like maternity services, cancer, Aboriginal health and the supply of health professionals. John Menadue will emphasise the importance of retaining a universal health service system and the fact that people in rural communities will be among those most disadvantaged if this does not happen. Robert Tickner, Secretary General of the Australian Red Cross, will outline the organisation's role in rural and remote areas and make the case for organisational change and modernisation of non-Government organisations.

One of the eighteen concurrent sessions will deal with the rural aspects of planning for a pandemic. In other sessions, both the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the longitudinal study into women's health will provide up-to-date reports on some of their rural research. Australia has lost 130 birthing services in the last ten years and four papers will be delivered on rural maternity services and perinatal care.

There will be seven papers on cancer services in rural areas, including one relating to the poorer survival rates for people with cancer in rural New South Wales. Kerry Strauch and Nicki Melville will provide some good news on cancer services, describing the successful Border Cancer Collaboration which provides service across State borders in the Albury-Wodonga region.

The Conference is being attended by over 1100 delegates from all parts of Australia. It will also hear a report from the pre-Conference workshop on Indigenous health with a rural action plan for moving to equal health for Indigenous people within a generation. Those at the Conference are being encouraged to translate their own local and professional experiences into recommendations for improvements in policies and programs that can support better health for country people.

The Conference is managed by the National Rural Health Alliance whose vision is equivalent health for those in country areas by the year 2020.

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