



NATIONAL RURAL  
HEALTH  
ALLIANCE INC.

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## **Greens show the way on rural and remote health**

The Greens, under the leadership of Senator Bob Brown, have committed strongly to most of the key priorities identified by the National Rural Health Alliance as being in the best interest of people in rural, regional and remote Australia.

Professor John Wakerman, Chairperson of the Alliance, has expressed delight that through its representation in the Senate the Greens would support a range of activities designed to improve the health of people in country areas.

“If and when the Senate returns to the position in which the minor parties have the balance of power, there will be a reservoir of good ideas for the health of country people,” Professor Wakerman said.

“The Greens have been the first to indicate support for the top strategic priorities of the Alliance - a national inquiry into rural and remote communities and an explicit national health policy.

“They have also committed to the sort of long-term, well funded and collaborative work on Indigenous health which the Alliance and many others are hoping for,” Professor Wakerman said.

A summary of the Greens’ positions on the Alliance's top 10 rural health priorities can be found by going to the [www.ruralhealth.org.au](http://www.ruralhealth.org.au) website. It shows that, given the opportunity in the Senate, the Greens will also support additional rural scholarships for health sciences, better access to tertiary and vocational education in the regions, and extra places for dental students.

“These announcements from the Greens provide a new benchmark for the other political parties to match, with the Greens now scoring 15 out of 20 on the Alliance’s election scorecard,” said Professor Wakerman.

### **Further information:**

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## Election scorecard

This scorecard refers to the political parties' election announcements on rural and remote health, and scores them against the top priorities of the NRHA.

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### Key:

- 0** no announcement or does not address the NRHA priority
- 1** announcement(s) which partially meet the NRHA priority
- 2** announcement(s) which fully meet the NRHA priority

Issue	Coalition	ALP	Democrats	Greens
1. National inquiry re sustainability of small rural/remote communities	0	0	0	2
2. A national health policy and plan	0	2	2	2
3. Part of which would be a national rural/remote health plan	0	2	0	0
4. Health infrastructure for small towns	1	1	0	2
5. National investment in equal Indigenous health	1	1	2	2
6. National investment in oral and dental health	1	2	2	2
7. Rural dental health workforce initiatives	2	0	1	1
8. Extra scholarships for medicine, nursing and allied health	0	1	1	2
9. National rural undergraduate placement scheme	0	0	2	0
10. Mental health services	1	1	2	2
<b>Running total (out of 20)</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>

1. To date only the Greens have committed to such an independent national inquiry.
2. The ALP intends to establish a National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission to lead development of a national health policy. The Democrats and Greens support this approach.
3. The ALP has committed to a specific rural/remote health plan within the national health policy and plan.
4. Neither major party has committed extra money for the Rural Medical Infrastructure Fund. Both are announcing financial support for facilities in selected towns. The Greens will support an increased number of multipurpose community health centres and services in rural and regional areas.
5. All Parties are committed to augmented funds for Indigenous health, but the plans of the Democrats and the Greens are more comprehensive (in terms of national coverage and/or funding to be committed).
6. The Coalition's dental health program under Medicare is less comprehensive than the ALP's plan for a Commonwealth Dental Health Program, with the latter supported by the Greens and Democrats.
7. The Coalition has announced a new dental school for Cairns. The Democrats have indicated specific support for rural/remote dental workforce proposals. The Greens support increased dental student places.
8. The Greens support undergraduate scholarships for rural people and would reduce the cost of access to higher education. The ALP would double the number of John Flynn Scholarships and the Democrats have indicated specific support for extra rural scholarships.
9. The Democrats have indicated specific support for an integrated rural placement scheme.
10. All Parties have recognised concerns about the spatial distribution of expenditures under the new Medicare item numbers for mental health. Special rural programs would be supported by Greens and Democrats.