



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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MINISTER LAUNCHES RURAL HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Health Minister Jillian Skinner today announced the establishment of a Ministerial Advisory Committee for Rural Health to improve both the delivery of health care and the general health of rural communities across NSW.

Mrs Skinner made the announcement while addressing the NSW Rural Health & Research Congress at Wagga Wagga.

The Ministerial Advisory Committee for Rural Health will be made up of rural clinicians, community members and members of Local Health Districts. The Committee will provide advice to the Minister on ways to improve patient services in rural NSW.

“The NSW Government understands that issues faced by rural communities in NSW are different to those in metropolitan areas. It is for this reason I have established this committee, to ensure the voice of rural NSW is heard and their health care needs are met well into the future,” Mrs Skinner said.

“The one size fits all approach isn’t always appropriate when delivering health services to rural communities. It’s vital that locals - whether clinicians or community members - are involved when determining local solutions to local problems.”

To support the Ministerial Advisory Committee, a Rural Health Unit will now be established within the NSW Ministry of Health to ensure recommendations of the committee encourage the development of rural health policies, and are monitored and evaluated.

“The Rural Health Unit will be instrumental in ensuring that local ideas and initiatives are taken from the bench to the bedside for the benefit of rural patients.

“In addition to the Rural Health Unit, the Agency for Clinical Innovation will develop a Rural Health Network, which will play a vital role in coordinating models of care in rural areas and advising how they can best be implemented by Local Health Districts.

“These three groups will be responsible for the development of the Rural Health Plan 2013 – 2017.

“I’m proud to be at Wagga Wagga to make this announcement today which will ensure rural health is firmly on the state agenda and given the attention it deserves.

“The NSW Government is committed to improving patient care in rural and regional in this state and we’re taking positive steps toward fulfilling this pledge today.”