



## **RURAL HEALTH PEAK BODY WELCOMES NEW HEALTH MINISTERS**

The Australian Rural Health Education Network (ARHEN) today congratulated the new Minister for Health the Hon Greg Hunt MP on his appointment to the portfolio.

ARHEN ([www.arhen.org.au](http://www.arhen.org.au)) is the peak body for Australia's 12 University Departments of Rural Health (UDRH) which focus on building the rural and remote health workforce through multidisciplinary education and training. UDRHs are located in every state and the NT. Three new UDRHs, in WA, Qld and NSW, are due to begin operating in April 2017.

ARHEN also welcomed the appointment of the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP to his new role as Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Indigenous Health.

“ARHEN looks forward to working with the new Ministers to continue the Government's clear commitment to addressing health workforce maldistribution issues in rural and regional areas,” ARHEN Chair Prof Sabina Knight said.

“A robust workforce including nursing, allied health and medical professionals who are committed to working in and for regional and remote Australia is key to the wellbeing of the 7 million plus Australians who live in these communities.

“The health of Indigenous Australians has always been a focus for ARHEN and we welcome the expertise and experience that Minister Wyatt will bring to this important portfolio.

“It is also pleasing to see that the Hon Dr David Gillespie, previously the Assistant Minister for Rural Health, will continue to have responsibility for rural and remote health and health workforce issues in his new role as Assistant Minister for Health. ARHEN values its productive working relationship with Dr Gillespie and looks forward to this continuing.”

ARHEN's commitment to working with government since 2001 to deliver the best possible health care to people living outside capital cities has recently been highlighted by the doubling of funding for established UDRHs. The doubling of the number of university health science students who undertake clinical placements in rural and remote areas through UDRHs is a vital part of the funding boost.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Media contact:**

ARHEN Chair, Prof Sabina Knight, 0417 823 933.