

Media alert -- Tuesday 17 June 2008

## **MEDIA ALERT**

### **Rural doctors to join rally on country health crisis, Parliament House, Adelaide, Wednesday**

**South Australian rural doctors will tomorrow (Wednesday) attend the rally being held at Parliament House in Adelaide to protest against the State Government's proposed SA Country Health Care Plan.**

President of the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) and Vice President of the Rural Doctors Association of South Australia (RDASA), Dr Peter Rischbieth, will address the rally to voice rural doctors' strong concerns with the plan and the devastating impact it could have on the ability of 400,000 country South Australians to access adequate local hospital care when they need it.

Dr Rischbieth is a rural doctor in Murray Bridge, SA. RDASA President, Dr Steve Holmes (a rural doctor in Clare, SA) and Dr Alison Edwards (a rural doctor in Port Broughton, SA) will also speak at the rally, along with AMA (SA) Executive Member, Dr Peter Sharley.

RDASA is particularly concerned at the Government's proposal to shut-down much-needed hospital inpatient services in 43 rural communities across the state — severely reducing access to local hospital care — and the flow-on effect the plan will have in discouraging local doctors and nurses to remain in these communities.

RDASA is also concerned at the heavy reliance the plan will place on distant air and road ambulance services in transporting more and more critical patients to larger centres following the downgrading of local rural hospitals. These services are already over-burdened, yet under the proposed plan they will face a massive increase in competing retrieval requests and (in the case of air retrieval) their reliability can be impacted by adverse weather conditions.

**What:** Public rally to protest against the SA Government's proposed SA Country Health Care Plan  
**When:** Wednesday 18 June 2008, commencing at 1pm Adelaide time  
**Where:** Front steps of Parliament House, Adelaide (North Terrace side)

**Additional doorstop:** Dr Peter Rischbieth, Dr Steve Holmes and Dr Alison Edwards — all country SA doctors — will hold a doorstop media conference on the front steps of Parliament House, Adelaide, at 2pm Adelaide time tomorrow (Wednesday) to further outline country doctors' strong concerns with the SA Country Health Care Plan.

**Contact: Dr Peter Rischbieth on 0408 813 143 or Dr Steve Holmes on 0428 421 000.  
RDAA media contact: Patrick Daley on 0408 004 890.**