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Ailing NSW Rural Health System Needs More than Band-Aid Solutions

Substantial injections of additional health dollars rather than short term bailouts are needed to turn around the crisis in the NSW rural health system, the Rural Doctors Association of NSW (RDA NSW) said.

“The latest financial and management problems in rural NSW health will not go away until the Rees Government is prepared to provide realistic support for the system we have, rather than continue to allow it to fall apart,” RDA NSW President Ian Kamerman said.

“Health Minister John Della Bosca is overseeing the death knell of health services around the state - we’re seeing it in Dubbo, where there’s not enough money to pay doctors or buy morphine, on the South Coast where Pambula Hospital is being stripped of essential services, including maternity and paediatrics, and in the Hunter where Kurri Kurri Hospital is under threat of closure.

“To do our job well rural doctors need surety of access to properly supported health services – and patients need confidence they can access appropriate health care when needed.

“Rural residents in NSW are significantly disadvantaged in their access to health services and as a result their health outcomes continue to lag well behind those living in Sydney. Yet, both the state and federal governments continue to spend



less per capita on the health care of rural people.

“Fairness and equity demand that the Health Minister and the Government address these serious concerns as a matter of urgency.

“As a starting point the Health Minister must listen to the clinicians and health professionals working on the ground – he could start by living up to his promise to visit Pambula Hospital. There are four GP obstetricians there waiting for such a visit.

“Those hardworking GPs want to tell the Minister why obstetric and paediatric services must be resumed in Pambula and what services their patients need both now and into the future,” Dr Kamerman said.

Available for interview:

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