

The Labor logo consists of a red horizontal bar with the word "Labor" in white, sans-serif font. To the right of the bar is a blue square containing four white stars, representing the Australian flag.

**MEDIA RELEASE** | **WE'LL PUT  
PEOPLE FIRST**

**CATHERINE KING MP  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND MEDICARE  
MEMBER FOR BALLARAT**

**TONY ZAPPIA MP  
SHADOW ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR MEDICARE  
MEMBER FOR MAKIN**

**\*\*\* EMBARGOED UNTIL 7PM ON WEDNESDAY, 26 APRIL 2017 \*\*\***

**TIME FOR A NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH STRATEGY**

Labor supports the development of a national rural health strategy and associated implementation plan, as part of ensuring there is clear and targeted action towards closing the gap in health outcomes between Australians living in rural areas and their metropolitan peers.

Shadow Minister for Health Catherine King announced Labor's support for a strategy at the National Rural Health Conference in Cairns, calling on the Government to join in bipartisan support.

"The impact of inequity on health and recognising the challenges that some groups face which require more targeted support - including rural and remote Australians - was a clear theme to emerge from Labor's National Health Summit in March," Ms King said.

"We think that a national rural health strategy is an important step to ensuring we have a defined roadmap to improving health outcomes for Australians living outside our big cities and I hope the Government follows our lead."

Shadow Assistant Minister for Medicare, Tony Zappia, said while Labor welcomes the implementation of the National Rural Health Commissioner, this single role will not be a cure-all.

"The National Rural Health Commissioner would aid in the implementation of a national rural health strategy, but we still need to have an understanding of where we are going, and what we are trying to achieve in rural health," Mr Zappia said.

"A national rural health strategy would help achieve this goal of all levels of Government working more closely together, to reduce fragmentation and duplication."

**WEDNESDAY 26 APRIL 2017**

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