

**Media release**  
**Wednesday 17 May 2017**



## **RAH outpatient shortfall cause for concern, but opportunity knocks for more specialist clinics in rural SA**

The Rural Doctors Association of South Australia (RDASA) is concerned by news regarding a reduction of outpatient clinics available when the new Royal Adelaide Hospital (RAH) opens later this year.

RDASA President, Dr Gerry Considine, is alarmed at suggestions by SA Health this week that the shortfall will be around 40,000 patients per year.

"We already know that a large proportion of rural patients make up these outpatient clinics and are currently faced with delays to see medical specialists. This can only mean longer waiting times or potentially fragmented care when directed to other metropolitan hospitals" he said.

"However, RDASA sees an opportunity for specialist clinics for rural patients to be conducted in rural and regional areas, saving hours of travel to the city for often short 10-15 minute consultations.

"Often our patients are forced to travel hundreds of kilometres to see a specialist in a metropolitan hospital for quick regular reviews or for yearly vehicle licensing sign-offs.

"Rather than requiring rural patients to do this, and also having to reimburse the travel costs of thousands of rural patients per month, it would make much more sense for our specialist colleagues to come to where the patients live and work."

Already a number of medical specialists such as cardiologists, endocrinologists and surgeons visit the regional areas of South Australia. A small number like urologists and psychiatrists even consult via video and teleconferencing. Dr Considine and RDASA believe that this can and should be expanded in the future.

"Rural people already suffer worse health outcomes than their city counterparts, so here is an opportunity to close that gap and offer better access to care, out there" Dr Considine said.

---

**Available for interview and further information:**

RDASA President, Dr Gerry Considine, on 0409 161 182.