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Incorporating AHPARR (Rural & Remote)***

## **MEDIA RELEASE / ALERT**

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### **Proposed Primary Health Care Organisations must involve all health professionals**

The Government's plan to establish Primary Health Care Organisations (PHCOs) has the potential to help Australians access health care services, but these will not be effective unless health consumers and allied health professionals are involved in setting them up, according to Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA).

Responding to the Government's announcement yesterday about the development of PHCOs, AHPA President Carol Mioduchowski said: "We applaud the Government for working on a better primary health care system in Australia. But it's disappointing the proposed system focuses almost entirely on doctors."

She said the Government's plan to set PHCOs up as part of the already-existing Divisions of General Practice won't result in an effective system, as the current Divisions structure does not support genuine multidisciplinary care.

"PHCOs must be based on a good governance structure, with all health care professionals – including allied health and nursing professionals – represented equally. Without this the system won't provide coordinated or integrated care," said Ms Mioduchowski.

She said PHCOs need to house a mix of health practitioners, including allied health professionals.

"The patient needs to be at the centre of the system and services must be able to be easily accessed. The system needs to promote multidisciplinary care and support learning between health care professionals. Only then will we be effective in addressing the health burden of chronic illness and preventable lifestyle behaviours and to ensure identification and appropriate intervention for complex developmental disorder," Ms Mioduchowski said.

"The Government is taking steps in the right direction in the primary health arena, but it is vital to get the detail right and to work collaboratively from the outset. All health care professionals have expertise to bring to the table in planning and developing PHCOs," she said.

## **ENDS**

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**Members:** Audiological Society of Australia, Australasian Podiatry Council, Australian Association for Exercise and Sports Science, Australian Association of Social Workers, Australian Institute of Radiography, Australian Orthotic and Prosthetic Association, Australian Psychological Society, Australian Sonographers Association, Dietitians Association of Australia, OT AUSTRALIA, Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health Inc, Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia, Speech Pathology Australia, The Orthoptic Association of Australia.

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