



Australian Government  
Department of Health and Ageing

# RURAL HEALTH WORKFORCE STRATEGY

## Rural Procedural Grants Program

## PROGRAM GUIDELINES

July 2011

# 1. Introduction

## Rural Procedural Grants Program

The Rural Procedural Grants Program provides financial assistance for procedural GPs in rural and remote areas to access relevant activities in order to assist them in maintaining or updating their skills.

Please note that the Rural Procedural Grants Program is a separate initiative to the Practice Incentives Program (PIP) Procedural GP Payment, which is for accredited practices providing anaesthetics, surgery and/or obstetric services in rural and remote Australia. Further information is available from the Department of Human Services by phoning 1800 222 032.

The Australian Standard Geographical Classification – Remoteness Areas (ASGC-RA) is the classification system used to define eligible areas.

### Key Principles of the Program

The Program supports procedural GPs in rural and remote areas to attend relevant training, which is focused on both skills maintenance and upskilling. Support is provided in the form of grant payments which are designed to assist with the cost of attending training, including course costs, locum relief and travel expenses. Grants are calculated on the number of days of training.

The Program has two components. It provides support for:

- 1) procedural GPs practising in surgery, anaesthetics and/or obstetrics in ASGC-RA 1-5 localities\*; and
- 2) GPs practising emergency medicine in ASGC-RA 2-5 localities.

**\*Note: Procedural GPs in ASGC-RA 1 localities are subject to specific eligibility criteria.**

GPs providing services in rural and remote areas but residing primarily in urban areas (eg locums, RFDS doctors) may be eligible for the Program.

### How to Apply

To receive grants under the Program, GPs must initially register with either the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) or the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) using the attached application form. Application forms are also available from the Department of Health and Ageing website [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au).

The Colleges assess a GP's eligibility to participate on the program. GPs who meet the eligibility criteria for both grant components are able to apply for both components on the same application form.

GPs will be advised of the outcome of their application for registration by the College to which they had applied. The College will notify the Department of Human Services of successful applicants. A register of eligible GPs will be maintained by the Department of Human Services. Applications will be treated as confidential and stored securely.

### Eligible Training

Once registered on the program, participants are able to make claims for grants following attendance at eligible training programs.

Eligible training programs must be for upskilling and skills maintenance, and can be both formal (eg courses) and informal (eg clinical attachments) delivery modes.

The ACRRM and the RACGP, in consultation with relevant external agencies, assess the eligibility of training for inclusion in the Program.

GPs are encouraged to contact the ACRRM or the RACGP prior to registering for training to confirm whether the proposed educational activity is eligible.

**Please note that you must register to participate in the Rural Procedural Grants Program prior to undertaking any educational activities which you would like to claim. Activities undertaken prior to registration are not eligible for payment.**

## 2. Component 1: Procedural GPs Practising in Surgery, Anaesthetics and/or Obstetrics

### GP Eligibility

This component is intended only for procedural GPs who:

- have already attained qualifications in a procedural field and/or;
- have recognition as a procedural GP in a rural hospital; and
- require on-going training to maintain their skill level.

For the purposes of this component, the definition of a procedural GP is:

“A rural or remote procedural general practitioner who provides non-referred services normally in a hospital theatre, maternity setting or other appropriately equipped facilities, that in urban areas are typically the province of a specific referral based specialty. Most commonly this refers to the fields of surgery, anaesthetics and obstetrics.

Elements essential to procedural medicine include the use of appropriately equipped facilities and resources and involve a team of health professionals and the active engagement of the practitioner in an appropriate skills maintenance program in the relevant procedural areas.”

Under this definition, procedural GPs undertaking rural hospital-based work may be eligible. Procedural GPs who perform any work in a rural hospital setting may also be eligible.

This component is available to:

- GPs practising in surgery, anaesthetics and/or obstetrics in ASGC-RA 2-5 localities; and
- GPs practising in surgery, anaesthetics and/or obstetrics in ASGC-RA 1 localities, who also meet additional criteria below.

GP Obstetricians and Surgeons in ASGC-RA 1 localities are required to:

- have unsupervised clinical privileges at the hospital;
- demonstrate that they are able to satisfy professional standards imposed by the hospital or Area Health Service; and
- provide routine obstetrics/surgical cover (including being regularly part of the on-call roster).

GP Anaesthetists in ASGC-RA 1 localities are required to:

- have unsupervised clinical privileges at the hospital;
- demonstrate that they are able to satisfy professional standards imposed by the hospital or Area Health Service; and
- provide routine general anaesthetics or major regional block (epidural/spinal) anaesthetics cover (including being regularly part of the on-call roster).

GP registrars in ASGC-RA 2-5 may be considered eligible for the grant if they:

- hold clinical privileges in the discipline in which they wish to register and are working unsupervised in that discipline (certification must be obtained from a hospital credentialing committee); and
- have pre-existing qualifications in one or more disciplines. Pre-existing qualifications may include a recognised qualification in the procedural components of Anaesthetics, Obstetrics, or Surgery (such as a DRANZCOG certificate).

The following are ineligible to participate in the program:

- GPs who undertake only minor procedural work in their rooms are not classified as procedural GPs for this component; and
- GPs seeking to attend training to become a procedural GP.

**Documentary evidence required**

All GPs will be required to provide evidence of their recognition as a current unsupervised provider of procedural services when registering for this component.

GPs in ASGC-RA 1 localities should contact the ACRRM or the RACGP to obtain information on how to provide evidence for the additional criteria.

**Value of the Grant**

A grant of \$2,000 per day for a maximum of 10 days per financial year is available. GPs are eligible to access the payment multiple times per financial year up to this maximum.

### 3. Component 2: GPs Practising Emergency Medicine

**GP Eligibility**

This component is available to GPs practising emergency medicine in ASGC-RA 2-5 locations and is intended for emergency medicine GPs who:

- have already attained the qualifications, clinical privileges or experience and necessary skills to practice emergency medicine unsupervised; and
- currently hold an appointment in emergency medicine at the facility nominated;
- provide evidence of regular involvement in a facility as outlined above; and
- require on-going training to maintain their skill level.

For the purposes of this component, the definition of a rural and remote emergency medicine GP is:

“A rural and remote practitioner who provides emergency medicine cover for non-referred services in an accident and emergency facility which is available for 24 hour triaging (hospital or other appropriately equipped facility – which provides a minimum equipment list of, but

not restricted to: intubation, cannulation and defibrillation equipment), rapid diagnosis and management of the acute and urgent aspects of illness and injury such as those typically brought to the door by ambulance.”

It is recognised that in some remote communities, these services can be substituted at times by remote triage and retrieval.

Emergency medicine GPs undertaking rural hospital-based work can be eligible for this component.

GP registrars with independent, unsupervised rights to practice emergency medicine and who are unable to access equivalent educational support through their GPET-funded vocational training are eligible for this incentive.

GP Registrars must provide the following additional documentation as part of their registration for the emergency medicine component:

- GP registrars must have completed a 12-months Advanced Specialist Post in Emergency Medicine and their relevant college (ACRRM or RACGP) must confirm this as part of the registration process; and
- GP registrars must provide evidence of regular participation in an on-call roster providing emergency medicine cover.

GPs seeking to attend training to attain skills in emergency medicine are not eligible for this Program.

**Documentary evidence required**

All GPs will be required to provide evidence of their recognition as a current unsupervised provider of emergency medicine services when registering for this component.

### Value of Grant

A grant of \$2,000 per day for a maximum of 3 days per financial year is available. GPs are eligible to access the payment multiple times per financial year up to this maximum.

### Locums

Rural locums only need to obtain clinical privileges in one hospital to be eligible for the program.

Rural locums will be deemed eligible for the program if they:

- a) undertake a minimum of one month (28 days) of locum work per financial year; or
- b) undertake locum placements on 8 occasions per financial year.

Evidence can be a letter from an employer or a declaration from the locum listing the upcoming placements and dates. Locums can be based in any geographical location, however they need to practise as a locum in ASGC-RA 2-5 localities in order to be eligible for registration in the program.

## 4. Other Program Matters

### Administration of the Program

The ACRRM and the RACGP are responsible for:

- assessing GP eligibility for the Program;
- maintaining a register of eligible GPs registered by each College;
- assessing training programs eligible to be accessed under the Program;
- ensuring the Department of Human Services is advised of eligible GPs; and
- ensuring claims for payments are supplied to the Department of Human Services.

The ACRRM is also responsible for the Secretariat of the Rural Procedural Grants Program Collaboration.

The Department of Human Services is responsible for maintaining a register of eligible GPs and for making grant payments to GPs on completion of eligible training.

### Payment of Grants

Eligible GPs receive a grant payment once the Department of Human Services receives evidence from the ACRRM or the RACGP of the GP's completion of eligible training. If registered for both components of the Program, the GP must indicate the grant for which they are claiming.

Grant payments to GPs are made directly to a bank account nominated by the GP. The Department of Human Services also forwards a statement to the GP detailing each payment made.

### Appeals

GPs may appeal to the Collaboration on matters relating to their eligibility for the Program. Such appeals should be made in writing through the Secretariat and must detail grounds for appeal.

### The Collaboration

The Rural Procedural Grants Program Collaboration is made up of representatives from the ACRRM and the RACGP.

The Secretariat for the Rural Procedural Grants Program can be contacted at the address below:

Secretariat  
Rural Procedural Grants Program Collaboration  
Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine  
GPO Box 2507  
BRISBANE QLD 4001

**Program Contact Details**

Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine  
GPO Box 2507  
BRISBANE QLD 4001  
Phone: 1800 223 226

OR

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners  
National Rural Faculty  
15 Gover Street  
NORTH ADELAIDE SA 5006  
Phone: 1800 636 764

**Payment Enquiries**

Department of Human Services  
PO Box 2844  
ADELAIDE SA 5001  
Phone: 1800 010 550

## Application to Register

This Program pays grants to rural and remote GPs to assist with the costs associated with attending upskilling and skills maintenance activities, including the cost of the required locum relief. The Program has two components:

- 1) grant payments to procedural GPs practising in surgery, anaesthetic and/or obstetrics; and
- 2) grant payments to GPs practising emergency medicine.

**If you are applying for Component 1: Grant for procedural GPs practising in surgery, anaesthetic and/or obstetrics please complete Parts A, B and D of the form.**

**If you are applying for Component 2: Grant for GPs practising in emergency medicine, please complete Parts A, C and D of the form.**

**If you are applying for both grants please complete all parts of the form.**

The attached application form is to be read and completed in conjunction with the *Rural Procedural Grants Guidelines – July 2011*. On completion please return this form with relevant documentation to either:

Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine  
GPO BOX 2507  
BRISBANE QLD 4001  
Fax: (07) 3105 8299

OR

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners  
National Rural Faculty  
15 Gover Street  
NORTH ADELAIDE SA 5006  
Fax: (08) 8267 8359

The ACRRM and the RACGP will forward the completed application forms of successful applicants to the Department of Human Services for registration purposes.

The information contained in this completed application form will be treated confidentially and stored securely.

## PART A

All applicants are required to complete this section.

GP Details	
<b>Full Name</b>	Title <input type="text"/> Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/> Dr <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="text"/>
	Family Name <input type="text"/>
	Given Names <input type="text"/>
<b>Provider Number</b>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
<b>Practice Name and Address</b>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/> Postcode <input type="text"/>
<b>Postal Address</b>	<input type="text"/>
If different from above	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/> Postcode <input type="text"/>
<b>Contact Details</b>	Daytime phone number <input type="text"/>
	Mobile phone number <input type="text"/>
	Fax number <input type="text"/>
	Email address <input type="text"/>
Grant payment should be made into the following account:	
Account Name	<input type="text"/>
Bank	<input type="text"/>
Branch	<input type="text"/>
BSB	<input type="text"/>
Account Number	<input type="text"/>

**Note: GPs may direct the funds to either a personal or a practice account.**

## PART B

**Note: If you have already been approved for procedural medicine you do not need to apply again – please go to Part C.**

I am applying for procedural GP eligibility (Component 1).

Tick box (you may tick more than one)

Surgery       Anaesthetics       Obstetrics

I obtained my MBBS (or equivalent) from \_\_\_\_\_ (insert country).

I obtained my primary training or qualification:

- in anaesthetics from \_\_\_\_\_ (insert country).
- in obstetrics from \_\_\_\_\_ (insert country).
- in surgery from \_\_\_\_\_ (insert country).

Documentation Required:

Recognition as a current unsupervised provider of procedural services as defined in the guidelines is demonstrated by the attached documentation (e.g. evidence of current unsupervised practice/clinical privileging/certification of scope of practice) from your Area Health Service or hospital credentialing committee.

**Note: Procedural GPs in ASGC-RA 1 localities are subject to specific eligibility criteria. Please contact either the ACRRM or the RACGP prior to applying.**

## PART C

Tick box

I am applying for emergency medicine eligibility (Component 2).

I obtained my MBBS (or equivalent) from \_\_\_\_\_ (insert country).

I obtained my primary training or qualification in emergency medicine from \_\_\_\_\_ (insert country).

Documentation Required:

Recognition as a current unsupervised provider of emergency medicine services as defined in the guidelines is demonstrated by the attached documentation (e.g. evidence of current unsupervised practice/clinical privileging/certification of scope of practice) from your Area Health Service or hospital credentialing committee.

## PART D

All applicants are required to complete this section.

I understand that the Department of Human Services, the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) may:

- access information regarding the training I have undertaken as part of this Program;
- provide reports regarding the training I attend; and
- provide information (which may include identifying information) relating to this application to the Department of Health and Ageing for statistical, evaluation, research and/or policy development purposes.

I understand that it may be necessary for these organisations to discuss the above issues with one another.

### Certification

I certify that the statements made in this application are, to the best of my knowledge, true and correct.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(please use BLOCK letters)

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Gender  Male  Female

I am a Registrar  Yes  No

(For Registrars only. The end date of my training is \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_)

Tick box

I have attached evidence of my recognition as a current unsupervised provider of relevant services as requested.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

You will be advised of your eligibility for this program. If you require further information please contact either the ACRRM on 1800 223 226 or the RACGP on 1800 636 764.

#### OFFICE USE ONLY

ASGC-RA

Applicant is already registered for:

Surgery  Anaesthetics  Obstetrics  Emergency Medicine

**[www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)**

All information in this document is correct as at June 2011