



**Australian Government**

**Department of Health**

# RURAL OTHER MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

January 2019



# RURAL OTHER MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS PROGRAM

## Important Notice:

From 1 January 2019, the Rural Other Medical Practitioners Program (the ROMPs Program) will not be accepting new applications to join the Program.

The ROMPs Program will cease on 30 June 2023. Medical practitioners already on the ROMPs Program can continue in the Program and access A1 Medicare rebates until 30 June 2023.

These Guidelines have effect from 1 January 2019.

## 1. Introduction

The Rural Other Medical Practitioners Program (the ROMPs Program) commenced in January 2001, and is administered by Department of Human Services through Medicare (DHS) on behalf of the Department of Health. All decisions under the Program are made by senior and executive officers in the Department of Health who are authorised by the Minister for Health (Authorised Persons).

The ROMPs Program provides the higher A1 Medicare rebate to eligible non-vocationally recognised medical practitioners who provide general practitioner services in designated rural and remote areas of Australia, and who express an interest in undertaking a pathway to Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) or the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM).

Participants in the ROMPs Program must provide services in any of the following designated locations:

- Rural, Remote Metropolitan Area (RRMA) classifications 4-7;
- Defined 'areas of consideration'; or
- Approved RRMA 3 locations which have significant medical workforce shortages.

## 2. Eligibility

To be eligible for this Program persons must:

- be a registered or licensed as a medical practitioner with the Medical Board of Australia;
- be a participant in an Other Medical Practitioners (OMPs) program on or after 1 January 2019;

- be a non-vocationally recognised medical practitioner or not hold fellowship of a general practice college;
  - be eligible to claim Medicare benefits; and
- express an interest in achieving Fellowship of the RACGP or the ACRRM.

OMPs programs are:

- Medicare Plus for Other Medical Practitioners Program (MOMPs Program)
- Rural Other Medical Practitioners Program (ROMPs Program)
- After Hours Other Medical Practitioners Program (AHOMPs Program)
- Outer Metropolitan Other Medical Practitioners Program (OMOMPs Program)

### **3. Transferring between Programs**

All OMPs programs were closed to new participants on 1 January 2019. Medical practitioners participating in another OMPs program before 1 January 2019 can apply to join the ROMPs Program, noting that all OMPs programs will cease on 30 June 2023. Applications to transfer between OMPs programs will be assessed against the eligibility requirements of the relevant program.

### **4. Eligible Locations**

The ROMPs Program will utilise the RRMA Classification system. Areas are classified from 1 (Capital) to 7 (Other Remote Area). The ROMPs Program applies to areas classified as RRMA 4-7. In general, RRMA 4-7 classifications cover small rural centres (population of less than 25,000 people), remote centres and smaller rural and remote areas.

It is important to note that the distance of the location from major metropolitan areas is a significant factor in determining the RRMA classification. As a result, small rural centres in close proximity to major metropolitan areas may not fall within the RRMA 4-7 range.

Areas of consideration are areas that are not classified RRMA 4-7 locations but exhibit the characteristics of rural areas. At the discretion of the Authorised Person RRMA 3 locations with significant workforce shortages can be deemed eligible areas for the purposes of the ROMPs Program.

If, over time, there is no longer an acute shortage in a RRMA 3 location, the Authorised Person will reverse the eligibility of the location. If this occurs, medical practitioners already accessing the A1 Medicare rebate through the ROMPs Program will be able to continue to access the higher Medicare rebate. New doctors will not be able to access the higher Medicare rebate in these locations through the program.

## **5. Authorised Person's Discretion**

The Authorised Person for the ROMPs Program will have full discretion to make decisions on all matters relating to the administration of the Program, including but not limited to approval of locations and medical practitioners.

## **6. Application Process**

Eligible medical practitioners should complete the ROMPs Registration Form and return it to DHS.

DHS is responsible for assessing applications for the ROMPs Program, and will process applications within 21 business days of receipt of completed forms.

DHS will advise successful applicants of the commencement date for payment of the higher A1 Medicare rebate in the letter advising approval for the Program. Payment of the higher rebate will not be backdated.

If the successful applicant already has a provider number for the practice location stated on their ROMPs application, they will not need to apply for a new provider number for that location. If they do not have a provider number for the practice location, they must complete an application for a provider number through DHS.

The Department of Health and DHS take no responsibility for medical practitioners who commence practice or commence billing at the higher A1 Medicare rebate prior to receiving approval from DHS.

### **Change of details**

Whilst participating in this Program, medical practitioners must:

- ensure their provider number is correct and up to date;
- ensure that the information provided to the Department of Health is accurate and current;
- advise the Department of Health of any change in circumstances which is relevant to continued eligibility for the Program; and
- ensure any change in circumstances is provided in writing to the Authorised Person.

## **7. Withdrawal from Program**

Medical Practitioners may withdraw from the Program at any time by providing written notice to the Department of Health.

The Department of Health will confirm the medical practitioner's withdrawal from the Program.

## 8. Program Contact Details

### Department of Health

To obtain further information regarding the program, contact:

[OMPs@health.gov.au](mailto:OMPs@health.gov.au)

### Department of Human Services - Medicare

To obtain application forms, payment information and advice, or to determine areas of workforce shortage eligibility, contact:

[PROVIDER.REGISTRATION@humanservices.gov.au](mailto:PROVIDER.REGISTRATION@humanservices.gov.au)

### Rural Workforce Agencies

The Rural Workforce Agencies (RWAs) are available to provide information on the ROMPs Program and to provide assistance in the application process. Your local RWA may be contacted on the numbers below.

#### New South Wales

NSW Rural Doctors Network (02) 4924 8000

#### Northern Territory

Northern Territory Primary Health Network (08) 8982 1000

#### Queensland

Health Workforce Queensland (07) 3105 7800

#### South Australia

Rural Doctors Workforce Agency (08) 8234 8277

#### Victoria

Rural Workforce Agency Victoria Ltd (03) 9349 7800

#### Tasmania

Health Recruitment Plus (03) 6334 2355

#### Western Australia

Rural Health West (08) 6389 4500

**For further information regarding continuing professional development contact:**

### The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

RACGP National Office

100 Wellington Parade

East Melbourne, VIC, 3002

Ph: 1800 472 247

[The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners](http://www.racgp.org.au) (www.racgp.org.au)

### The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine

ACRRM

GPO Box 2507

Brisbane, QLD, 4000

Ph: 1800 223 226



