



Australian Government

Department of Health

**Flexible Fund Guidelines
HEALTH WORKFORCE FUND
January 2014**

Introduction

The Health Workforce Fund (the Fund) is an Australian Government initiative administered by the Department of Health designed to support activities that will improve the capacity, quality and mix of the health workforce to meet the requirements of health services, including through training, registration, accreditation and distribution strategies.

The Fund consolidates a range of existing programs. These programs have been operating for some time and therefore have existing commitments. Additionally a component of the Fund is entitlement based. An amount of approximately \$35 million is available over the period until 2014-15. This funding will be made available through grant or procurement processes to deliver outcomes that meet the aims, objectives and priorities of the Fund.

The vast majority of the Health Workforce Fund is currently allocated to Government commitments. However, these guidelines will be applicable in the event of future funding rounds.

Fund objectives and priorities

Broadly, the Fund's primary objective is to strengthen the capacity of the health workforce to deliver high quality care by targeting the following priority areas:

- **Increase the supply of health workers** - to take into account the changing demographics of the Australian population, and to facilitate a more even distribution of workforce in terms of geography and of the types of services provided;
- **Ensure a capable and qualified workforce** - through registration, accreditation, training and development;
- **Support the Indigenous health workforce** – through activities that promote an increase in the capacity of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce and the broader health workforce to address the needs of Indigenous people.
- **Address health workforce shortages in regional, rural and remote Australia** – through, for example, rural workforce programs and better targeting of workforce incentives.

Fund Priorities may be adjusted from time to time to take into account evidence about the effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness of Fund activities, as well as emerging health workforce challenges.

Approximately 26 programs that are outlined in the Portfolio Budget Statements have been consolidated into the HWF. Activities under the HWF at initial implementation include programs aimed at supporting:

- General Practice training
- Specialist medical training
- Nursing, midwifery and allied health workforce training
- Telehealth – (for the training of health professionals)
- The recruitment, retention and support of Overseas Trained Doctors (OTDs)
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce through the provision of education, training and mentoring
- Health workforce locum schemes
- Increased number of, and levels of support to, health professionals working in regional, rural and remote Australia
- The development and regulation of the health workforce

- The HECS reimbursement scheme
- Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship (MRBS) Scheme.

Background

The Health Workforce Fund was established in 2011 through the consolidation of a range of existing programs.

The Fund objectives and policy intent have been defined broadly, with the primary objective being to support the delivery of a high quality, well distributed future health workforce. There is a continued commitment within the fund to key priorities including programs that increase training opportunities, assist retention and provide support to doctors, nurses and allied health professionals.

The establishment of the Fund followed a strategic review of the administrative arrangements in the Health portfolio commissioned by the Government in 2010. The review identified an opportunity to improve the management of existing health workforce programs through consolidating them into larger, flexible Funds, in order to cut red tape for grant holders, increase flexibility, and more efficiently provide evidence based funding for the delivery of health outcomes in the community. Further information about the [strategic review and the establishment of the flexible Funds](#) is available on the Department's website at: www.health.gov.au.

On the condition that further uncommitted funding becomes available, the Fund is intended to be flexible enough to continue to support the types of activities that have previously been supported under the various consolidated programs (subject to demonstrated evidence of their effectiveness and available funding), but in a more streamlined manner, as well as new health workforce priorities.

Fund scope and operating parameters

The Fund is intended to be broad in scope, and flexible enough to support a wide range of activities for the purposes of strengthening the capacity, quality and mix of the health workforce to meet the requirements of health services, including through training, registration, accreditation and distribution strategies.

As funding becomes available, it will be allocated by the Minister for Health for Fund priorities and activities, and then deployed as set out in these guidelines at [Section 4](#).

The funding committed to particular Fund Priorities and supported activities may be varied over time, to take into account:

- Availability of funding;
- Evidence, including from evaluation activities, of the effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness of Fund activities; and
- Emerging government priorities and announcements.

.1.1 Roles and responsibilities

Minister

The Minister for Health will be responsible for reviewing/setting priorities for the Fund and the allocation of funding against these priorities. These priorities will at all times reflect the aims and objectives of the Fund but may change over time to address emerging issues that will support health workforce activities more effectively.

Department of Health

With the exception of entitlement and demand driven programs, the Department will be responsible for the development and dissemination of all application documentation under the Fund and for ensuring that such documentation is in accordance with the Fund's aims, objectives and priorities. The Department will be responsible for notifying applicants of the outcomes of any funding process and will be responsible for responding to queries in relation to the application process, and for resolving any uncertainties that may arise in relation to application requirements.

The Department will also manage the funding arrangements under the Fund and undertake all assessment processes.

The Department will also be responsible for all management and monitoring requirements of successful applicants in any process under the Fund such as:

- developing funding agreements or any alternative contractual arrangement;
- monitoring the performance of projects to ensure the conditions of the contractual arrangement are met;
- assessing performance and financial reports and undertaking follow up activity as necessary;
- making payments on acceptance of milestone reports as specified in the contractual arrangement; and
- providing feedback to funded organisations on the overall project following the conclusion of activities.

Department of Human Services (Medicare)

The Department of Human Services (DHS) will be responsible for the dissemination of all application documentation for entitlement and demand driven programs. DHS will be responsible for notifying applicants of the outcomes for any entitlement or demand driven program and will be responsible for responding to queries in relation to the application process, and for resolving any uncertainties that may arise in relation to application requirements.

Where DHS administers entitlement and demand driven programs in association with other funded entities, the funded entity may be responsible for notifying applicants of their eligibility and responding to queries in relation to the application process.

Applicants

In the event of future funding rounds, entities/individuals applying for grants under the Fund are responsible for the development of their application. As part of any application process organisations submitting applications must ensure all information they provide is accurate.

The Department will enter into contractual arrangements for funding under the Fund with single agencies only. Where two or more organisations seek funding as a consortium, a member organisation must be appointed as the lead member and the organisation who will enter into any subsequent contractual relationship with the Department. The lead member must be identified in any application for funding and that application should identify all members of the proposed consortium.

Organisations applying must be prepared to meet the costs associated with the development and lodgement of their application.

Funded Entity/Individual

In the event of future funding rounds, the funded entity/individual is responsible for the efficient and effective delivery of the service in accordance with the obligations contained in any funding agreement or contractual arrangement entered into under the Fund. Organisations funded under the Fund are also responsible for:

- ensuring they meet the specifications of the funding agreement or other contractual arrangement;
- ensuring the project is managed in a cost effective and efficient manner;
- maintaining contact with the Department and advising of any emerging issues that may impact on the success of the project;
- identifying and documenting risks and the appropriate control strategies;
- reporting on project performance and expenditure in accordance with the contractual obligations; and
- assisting with evaluation activities as necessary.

.1.2 Fund Timeframe

The Fund is an ongoing initiative available from 1 July 2011.

Timeframes for specific activities under the priorities may vary depending upon the grant process and the expected outcomes of the individual activities. Timeframes for activities associated with the grant processes will be clearly specified in the application package for that process.

.1.3 Fund value

The total value of the Health Workforce Flexible Fund is \$3.708 billion over the period 2011-12 to 2014-15. Most of this funding is currently allocated to existing Government priorities. Funding is also committed through grants and demand driven/entitlement programs delivered by the Department of Human Services (DHS).

The Department will review priorities under the Fund on an annual basis and provide advice to the Minister on emerging needs, to allow for the adjustment of future funding allocation against priorities and to ensure that emerging health challenges are being addressed.

Eligibility

.1.4 Who can access the Fund?

In the event of future funding rounds and with the exception of entitlement and demand driven programs, applicants are encouraged from a wide range of non-government and government organisations and also includes students and individuals. Applicants are not required to have had a prior funding relationship established with the Department, but organisations must be a legal entity to be eligible for funding for example:

- a) Incorporated Associations (incorporated under State/Territory legislation, commonly have 'Association' or 'Incorporated' or 'Inc' in their legal name);
- b) Incorporated Cooperatives (also incorporated under State/Territory legislation, commonly have "Cooperative" in their legal name);
- c) Companies (incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 - maybe not-for-profit or for-profit

- proprietary company (limited by shares or by guarantee) or public companies);
- d) Aboriginal Corporations (incorporated under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2006 and administered by the Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporations);
 - e) Organisations established through a specific piece of Commonwealth or State/Territory legislation (many public benevolent institutions, churches, universities, unions etc);
 - f) Partnerships;
 - g) Trustees on behalf of a Trust;
 - h) State/Territory or Local Governments; and
 - i) where there is no suitable alternative, an individual or - jointly and separately – individuals.

Should a grant process have restricted eligibility requirements (such as the requirement to be listed as an Approved Provider of residential aged care services) this will be clearly specified in the application package for that process.

In the case of entitlement and demand driven programs, the eligibility criteria on which the assessment of applicants is based is detailed in the individual program guidelines which are available from DHS or the funded entity. (A funded entity is defined as any entity that has been successful in a grant process under the Flexible Fund.)

.1.5 What is eligible for funding?

In the event of future funding rounds and with the exception of entitlement and demand driven programs, applications must propose to undertake activities that meet the aims, objectives and priorities for the Fund, and comply with the terms of the application documentation.

Matters such as:

- project activities/items that will be considered eligible;
- any funding caps (minimum and/or maximum limits);
- any restrictions on Start/End dates for activity. For example, all projects must be completed within the stated Financial Year/s;
- any restrictions around whether funding will be provided only for new or additional work; and
- any restrictions on when funding must be expended by. For example, all funding will be available from 1 July 2011 and must be expended by 30 June 2015;

will be included in any Invitation to Apply or Approach to Market documentation, as required.

Retrospective items/activities will not normally be funded by the Fund (NB: Unless allowed under the terms of the Fund and agreed by the Department).

Applications for entitlement and demand driven programs are assessed in accordance with the program guidelines which must support the aims, objectives and priorities for the Fund.

Probity

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that the process for providing funding under the Health Workforce Fund is transparent and in accordance with published Fund Guidelines. Individual grant processes will contain detailed guidance on the specific requirements for that process and these will not be inconsistent with the Fund Guidelines.

Note: Fund Guidelines may be varied from time-to-time by the Australian Government as the needs of the Fund dictate. Amended Fund Guidelines will be published on the Department's website in advance of any grants process.

Conflict of interest

Each applicant will be required to declare as part of any application process, existing conflicts of interest or that to the best of their knowledge there is no conflict of interest, including in relation to the examples below, that would impact on or prevent the applicant from proceeding with the project or any contractual arrangement it may enter into with the Australian Government.

Where an applicant subsequently identifies that an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest exists or might arise in relation to an application for funding, the applicant must inform the Department in writing immediately.

A conflict of interest may exist, for example, if the applicant or any of its personnel:

- Has a relationship (whether professional, commercial or personal) with a party who is able to influence the application assessment process, such as a Department staff member;
- Has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicant in carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently; or
- Has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain as a result of the granting of funding under the Health Workforce Fund.

.1.6 Confidentiality and Protection of Personal Information

Each applicant will be required to declare as part of their application, their ability to comply with the proposed contractual arrangement to be entered into with the Australian Government.

The Protection of Personal Information Clause requires the Funded organisation to:

- comply with the *Privacy Act (1988)* ('the Privacy Act'), including the 11 Information Privacy Principles (IPPs), as if it were an agency under the Privacy Act, and the National Privacy Principles (NPPs);
- refrain from engaging in direct marketing (s 16F of the Privacy Act), to the extent that the NPP and/or s 16F apply to the Funded organisation; and
- impose the same privacy obligations on any subcontractors it engages to assist with the Project.

The Confidentiality Clause in any subsequent contractual arrangement imposes obligations on the funded organisation with respect to special categories of information collected, created or held under the Agreement. The funded organisation is required to seek the Commonwealth's consent in writing before disclosing Confidential Information.

The specific clauses governing the confidentiality provisions of any grant process under this Fund will be contained in the contract that will form part of any grant application documentation available to potential applicants.

Fund Application Processes

In the event of future funding rounds, access to funding from the Health Workforce Fund will be available via a variety of means. The Department proposes to undertake the following to achieve the Fund's aims, objectives and priorities:

.1.7 Open Grant rounds

Regular competitive funding rounds which open and close to applications on nominated dates, with eligible applications being assessed against the selection criteria set down for the initiative and then prioritised against competing, eligible applications for the available funding will be undertaken to achieve the Fund's aims, objectives and priorities.

.1.8 Targeted grant rounds

Funding will also be made available through targeted or restricted competitive funding rounds from time to time to meet the Fund's aims, objectives and priorities. These grant rounds will be open to a small number of potential funding recipients based on the specialised requirements of the initiative or project under consideration.

.1.9 Entitlement arrangements / demand driven programs

Applications may be submitted at any time over the life of the program and are assessed individually against the specified eligibility criteria set down for the entitlement with decisions being determined without reference to the comparative merits of other applications.

.1.10 One off/Unsolicited activities

One off/unsolicited activities may be funded outside of grant rounds on the provision that the activity meets the Fund's aims, objectives and priorities.

.1.11 Program underspends

Funding allocations will be monitored throughout the year with potential underspends identified. Applications identified as being able to meet the Fund's aims, objectives and priorities, and not receiving funding through an open or targeted grants round will be prioritised and shortlisted for consideration should such underspends be identified. Under expenditure may also be used to fund unsolicited proposals or one-off grants where such proposals will meet the Fund's aims, objectives and priorities.

From time to time, the Commonwealth may direct additional or supplementary funding to services under the Fund. For example providing targeted services to areas where evidence shows that there is a need.

These Fund Guidelines will form part of the Invitation to Apply documentation and must be met in all circumstances where grant or procurement arrangements are entered into under the Fund.

In urgent or unforeseen circumstances the Minister or Departmental Delegate has the right to waive eligibility criteria.

.1.12 Application Processes:

A range of activities will be funded under the Fund. With the exception of entitlement and demand driven programs, each funding process will have comprehensive Invitation to Apply documentation developed that will detail at a minimum the following:

- How the initiative meets the aims, objectives and priorities of the Fund as specified in Section 1 above;
- Eligibility criteria – as specified in Section 2 above;
- Assessment criteria – specifically relating to the activities being funded;
- Assessment process – as specified in Section 1.3 above;

- Funding available;
- Timeline for funding;
- Proposed contractual arrangements – as specified at Section 5;
- Procedures for submitting an application;
- Contact officer for applicants; and
- Fund Guidelines.

A full suite of documentation will be provided with each funding process. Where possible a minimum of one month's notice will be given to potential applicants of any proposed funding process. Such notice including the broad objectives of the funding round, the level of funding available and the timeframe for funding will be published on the [Departments internet site](http://www.health.gov.au) at www.health.gov.au.

.1.13 Decisions

Approval of funding

With the exception of entitlement and demand driven programs, following an appraisal of the application/s by the Fund Assessment Panel for that process, advice will be provided to the Funding Approver on the merits of the application/s. The final decision about the approval of a grant will be made by the Minister for Health or agency Chief Executive (including a Chief Executive's delegate).

Assessment panels are required to make recommendations to the expenditure delegate, within the policies of the Commonwealth and the reasons for which the funds have been made available. These panels are made up of departmental officials. Outside experts will only be engaged to provide the panels with specific analysis and advice on the criteria within their scope of expertise, if this is required.

The Approver will consider the advice provided by the assessment panel and whether the proposal will make an efficient, effective, ethical and economical use of Commonwealth resources, as required by Commonwealth legislation, and whether any specific requirements will need to be imposed as a condition of funding. Funding approval is at the discretion of the Approver.

Advice to applicants

Applicants will be advised by letter of the outcome of their application. Letters to successful applicants will contain details of any specific conditions attached to the funding. In accordance with the Commonwealth Grants Guidelines grant approvals will also be listed on the Department's website. The Department will notify all unsuccessful applicants.

Complaint handling

DoH's [Procurement and Funding Complaints Handling Policy](#) applies to complaints that arise in relation to a procurement or funding process. It covers events that occur between the time the request documentation is released publicly and the date of contract execution, regardless of when the actual complaint is made. DoH requires that all complaints relating to a grant or procurement process must be lodged in writing. Further details of the policy are available on the 'About Us' page on the Department's internet site (www.health.gov.au).

Decision making for entitlement and demand driven programs

The appraisal of an application for a grant under an entitlement or demand driven program is undertaken in accordance with the program guidelines. Decisions on the approval of these grants are

made by DHS or in some cases by another funded entity who co-administers the program in association with DHS.

Successful and unsuccessful applicants are advised by letter of the outcome of their application. If an applicant chooses to appeal a decision, the appeal will be forwarded to the Department for review.

Conditions of Funding

.1.14 Contracting arrangements

Successful applicants funded under the Fund will be required to enter into a funding agreement or alternative contractual arrangement with the Commonwealth (represented by the Department).

A copy of the proposed contractual arrangement will form part of any material that forms the basis of a grant process under this Fund.

.1.15 Specific conditions

There may be specific conditions attached to the funding approval required as a result of the appraisal process or imposed by the Approver. These will be identified in the offer of funding or during contract negotiations.

.1.16 Payment arrangements

Payments will usually be made on achievement of agreed milestones.

Before any payment can be made, funding recipients will be required to provide:

- a tax invoice for the amount of the payment; and
- evidence of meeting the obligations of the contract/funding agreement.

Where payments are linked to the achievement of specific milestones, payments will only be made after the Department is satisfied that those milestones and associated obligations of the contractual arrangement have been met.

Payments associated with demand driven programs are generally made through the Department of Human Services. Recipients should submit applications for payments directly to DHS. Where a demand driven program is administered in association with another funded entity, the funded entity will advise DHS when the applicants have met the requirements that trigger the grant payments and advise that the grant payment can be made.

.1.17 Reporting requirements

Funding recipients will be required to provide progress reports on the agreed milestones. These progress reports may include funding acquittal requirements. The timing of progress reports will be negotiated and form part of the final contractual arrangement. The format and framework for providing progress reports will take into account the size, cost and relative risks of the initiative/project being undertaken by the funding recipient.

Reports on entitlement and demand driven programs must be provided to the Department by DHS in the timeframes and format outlined in the program specific Business Practice Agreements between the Department and DHS.

.1.18 Monitoring

The funded entity will be required to actively manage the delivery of the project. The Department will monitor progress against the funding agreement or contract through assessment of progress reports and by conducting site visits as necessary.

.1.19 Evaluation

An evaluation by the Department will determine how the funding contributed to the objectives of the Fund. Funding recipients may be required to provide information to assist in this evaluation for a period of time, as stipulated in the funding agreement or contract, after funding has been provided.

Procurement activities

Funds appropriated for the purpose of the Health Workforce Fund may also be used for the procurement of work directly related to the purpose of the Fund e.g. Program Evaluation. Such Procurements will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth Procurement Rules and will be for purposes that are consistent with the aims, objectives and priorities of the Fund.

Entitlement and Demand Driven Programs

Funds appropriated for the purpose of the Health Workforce Fund may also be used for entitlement and demand driven programs, e.g. the Practice Nurse Incentive Program and the HECS Reimbursement Scheme. The application process and detailed selection criteria for each individual entitlement and demand driven program is detailed in program guidelines available on the [Department of Human Services](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/) website (<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/>) in the 'Health professionals' section.

Glossary of Terms

APPLICANTS – means any entity that applies for funding under the Flexible Fund

APPROACH TO MARKET – means any invitation by the Department to an organisation/s to apply for funding under the fund, this can refer to a grant or procurement process.

ENTITLEMENT PROGRAMS - refers to funding under which applications may be submitted at any time over the life of the program and are assessed individually against the specified criteria set down for the entitlement with decisions being determined without reference to the comparative merits of other applications

FLEXIBLE FUND – means the HEALTH WORKFORCE FLEXIBLE FUND as described in Section 1 of these Guidelines

FUNDED ENTITY- means any entity that has been successful in a grant process under the Flexible Fund.

FUNDING APPROVER- means the office or individual identified in any grant documentation as the decision maker in any process under the Fund.

HEALTH WORKFORCE – may include any or all of the following: medical, dental and allied health professionals, nurses and midwives, Indigenous health workers and other vocationally or tertiary trained health workers that support the provision of health services.

PROGRAM - means a pre existing grants program that has been subject to consolidation into the Fund.

Priority 1: Increase the supply of health workers, to take into account the changing demographics of the Australian population, and to facilitate a more even distribution of workforce in terms of geography and of the types of services provided.

Potential activities:

In order to increase the supply of workers in the health professions and to facilitate a more even distribution of workforce in terms of geography and types of services provided, the Department may fund a range of programs/projects targeted at, but not limited to:

- increasing the number of health professionals working in rural areas and ensure they are well trained, with appropriate skills to meet health needs;
- supporting national peak bodies providing advocacy, support and mentoring services and improving access, recruitment, training and retention for health workforce in rural, regional and remote areas;
- supporting general practice training programs;
- supporting the recruitment and retention of overseas and Australian-trained doctors and providing assistance to help orientate overseas trained doctors into their new practice;
- increasing the health workforce by investing in new and/or expanded roles including increased scope of practice for some professionals and nurse practitioner and midwifery roles;
- increasing the number of people trained in professions required to deliver radiation oncology treatment.

Broad assessment requirements

The first level of assessment for any grant arrangement will be to determine the capacity of the applicant and the proposed project to meet the purpose, scope, objectives and outcomes of the Fund and the priority to increase the supply of workers in all health professions and facilitate a more even distribution of workforce.

The second level of assessment of a grant arrangement will be against a range of evaluation criteria that directly relate to the support for activities which may include, but is not limited to:

- the relevance and effectiveness of the proposal to provide support for activities that improve the capacity, quality and mix of the health workforce;
- demonstration that the project is supported by the nominated community/ies;
- complete details of the Project Plan and Budget Projections;
- demonstration that the benefits of the project are sustainable;
- demonstration of partnerships with other organisations to maximise the outcomes of the project; and
- details of the applicant's capacity to implement the project within proposed timeframes and meet reporting requirements.

Entitlement and Demand Driven Programs

The application process and detailed selection criteria for each individual entitlement and demand driven program is detailed in program guidelines available on the [Department of Human Services](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/) website (<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/>) in the "Health professionals" section.

Priority 2 – Ensuring a capable and qualified health workforce through registration, accreditation, training and development.

Potential activities:

In order to support the training and development of the health workforce, the Department may fund a range of programs/projects targeted at, but not limited to:

- supporting the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS);
- supporting general practice training programs;
- supporting specialist training;
- supporting training and development in professions required to deliver radiation oncology services;
- supporting innovative clinical teaching and training for health professionals using online technologies to deliver health services, such as Telehealth;
- building the capacity of the health workforce and increasing access to training through scholarships and support; and
- supporting infrastructure projects to increase capacity and improve the distribution of clinical teaching and training.

Broad assessment requirements

The first level of assessment for any grant arrangement will be to determine the capacity of the applicant and the proposed project to meet the purpose, scope, objectives and outcomes of the Fund and the priority to support the training and development of the health workforce.

The second level of assessment of a grant arrangement will be against a range of evaluation criteria that directly relate to the support for activities that ensure a capable and qualified workforce, which may include, but is not limited to:

- the relevance and effectiveness of the proposal to provide support for activities that improve the capacity, quality and mix of the health workforce;
- demonstration that the project is supported by the nominated community/ies;
- complete details of the Project Plan and Budget Projections;
- demonstration that the benefits of the project are sustainable;
- demonstration of partnerships with other organisations to maximise the outcomes of the project; and
- details of the applicant's capacity to implement the project within proposed timeframes and meet reporting requirements.

Priority 3- Supporting the Indigenous health workforce

Activities that promote an increase in the capacity of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce and increase the capacity of the broader health workforce to address the needs of Indigenous people.

Potential Activities

In order to support these activities, the Department may fund a range of programs/projects targeted at, but not limited to:

- increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in vocational training and education, and tertiary health courses (for example through the Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarship Scheme and support of Rotary Australia's Scholarship program);
- work with education providers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander national peak bodies to improve curricula focus on Indigenous health needs and services;
- progress Indigenous health workforce issues through the COAG committees structure;
- support national peak bodies providing advocacy, support and mentoring services and improving access, recruitment, training and retention for the Indigenous health workforce;
- ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific programs are optimally effective; and
- contribute to the workforce related elements of the COAG National Health Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Broad assessment requirements

The first level of assessment for any grant arrangement will be to determine the capacity of the applicant and the proposed project to meet the purpose, scope, objectives and outcomes of the Fund and the priority to support activities that promote an increase in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce or increase the capacity of the broader health workforce to address the needs of Indigenous people.

The second level of assessment of a grant arrangement will be against a range of evaluation criteria that directly relate to the support for activities that promote increase in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce or increase the capacity of the broader health workforce to address the needs of Indigenous people, which may include, but is not limited to:

- the relevance and effectiveness of the proposal to provide support for activities that improve the capacity, quality and mix of the health workforce;
- demonstration that the project is supported by the nominated community/ies;
- complete details of the Project Plan and Budget Projections;
- demonstration that the benefits of the project are sustainable;
- demonstration of partnerships with other organisations to maximise the outcomes of the project; and
- details of the applicant's capacity to implement the project within proposed timeframes and meet reporting requirements.

Priority 4 - Addressing health workforce shortages in regional, rural and remote Australia.

Potential Activities:

In order to address health workforce shortages in regional, rural and remote Australia, the Department may fund a range of programs/projects targeted at, but not limited to:

- developing, implementing and monitoring rural workforce programs;
- workforce incentives to encourage the medical workforce to move to, and remain in, regional, rural or remote locations and target communities of greatest need;
- increasing rural locum support to enable health professionals in rural areas to take leave for professional reasons without adversely affecting service delivery capacity;
- investing in rural education to provide rural training opportunities to medical, nursing, midwifery and allied health students;
- assisting to reduce professional isolation for health professionals working in rural and remote areas; and
- supporting national peak bodies providing advocacy, support and mentoring services and improving access, recruitment, training and retention for health workers in rural, regional and remote areas.

Broad assessment requirements

The first level of assessment for any grant arrangement will be to determine the capacity of the applicant and the proposed project to meet the purpose, scope, objectives and outcomes of the Fund and the priority to support activities that address health workforce shortages in regional, rural and remote Australia.

The second level of assessment of a grant arrangement will be against a range of evaluation criteria that directly relate to the support for activities that address health workforce shortages in regional, rural and remote Australia, which may include, but is not limited to:

- the relevance and effectiveness of the proposal to provide support for activities that improve the capacity, quality and mix of the health workforce;
- demonstration that the project is supported by the nominated community/ies;
- complete details of the Project Plan and Budget Projections;
- demonstration that the benefits of the project are sustainable;
- demonstration of partnerships with other organisations to maximise the outcomes of the project; and
- details of the applicant's capacity to implement the project within proposed timeframes and meet reporting requirements.

Entitlement and Demand Driven Programs

The application process and detailed selection criteria for each individual entitlement and demand driven program is detailed in program guidelines available on the [Department of Human Services](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/) website (<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/>) in the "Health professionals" section.

Activities to be supported under the Health Workforce Fund include those currently supported under:

Radiation Oncology Specialist - Strengthening Cancer Care program - Training and development programs

- General Practice Training - Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) program
- HECS Reimbursement Scheme
- Telehealth - Training of Health Professionals
- COAG Health Workforce GP Training Places - Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) program
 - Consolidation of Specialist Training Simplifying Australian Government Support for Medical Specialist Education and Training
 - Educational Support projects
 - Diagnostic Imaging: Enhancing Rural and Remote Workforce Scheme
- International Recruitment Strategy (IRS) - Overseas Trained Doctors Additional Assistance Scheme
- Health Workforce Innovation and Reform
- Supporting Emergency Medicine Workforce
- Practice Nurse Incentive Program
- Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship and Support Scheme and Maternity Services Review - GP Scholarships Program
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Services – Puggy Hunter Scholarship Scheme
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Service:
 - supporting Indigenous doctors, nursing and other health professional bodies
 - provision of education, training and mentoring of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers in the Aboriginal community controlled health sector
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Services - Dental Health Training
- Rural and Remote General Practice Program
- National Rural and Remote Health Workforce Program
 - Bush Services Support program
- Rural Health Workforce Strategy - Scaling Rural Workforce Communications
 - Rural Health Champions Program
 - development and dissemination of information and publications
 - video productions aimed at attracting GPs to practise in rural areas
- Rural Locum Education Assistance Program
- Supporting Rural Health - Specialist Obstetrician Locum Scheme
- Nursing Rural Locum Scheme
- Allied Health Rural Locum Scheme
- Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training (RHMT) Program
- Rural Australia Medical Undergraduate Scholarship (RAMUS) Scheme
- Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship (MRBS) Scheme
- Rural Health Continuing Education Sub-Program (RHCE)
- Rural Procedural Grants Program