



FACT SHEET – RURAL OTHER MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS PROGRAM (ROMPS)

From 1 January 2019, the Rural Other Medical Practitioners Program (ROMPs) will close to new participants.

Doctors currently participating in the ROMPs will be grandfathered and can continue to access the higher Vocationally Registered (VR) items in the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) until 30 June 2023.

WHY IS THE ROMPS CEASING ON 1 JANUARY 2019?

One initiative under the Stronger Rural Health Strategy, announced in the 2018-19 Budget is the reform of MBS access for doctors. The aim of the reform is to reward investment in attaining general practice fellowship and encourage more doctors to work in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia.

One part of this reform is to close the Other Medical Practitioner (OMP) programs to new participants from 1 January 2019. These programs are:

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

I AM CURRENTLY ON THE ROMPS – HOW LONG CAN I STAY ON THIS PROGRAM?

Under grandfathering arrangements, eligible doctors who are participating on any of the OMPs programs will be given up to 30 June 2023 to fulfill their commitment to obtain fellowship. Doctors must continue to meet the eligibility requirements of the OMPs program to maintain access.

IF I MOVE TO A NEW PRACTICE CAN I STILL ACCESS ROMPS?

Yes. Grandfathered doctors who move to an eligible location can still apply to access the higher value VR items under ROMPs until 30 June 2023.



IF I AM ALREADY ON THE ROMPS PROGRAM, CAN I APPLY TO ANOTHER OMPS PROGRAM?

Yes. Doctors who were enrolled on one of the closing OMPs programs as at 1 January 2019 can make an application to join one of the other OMPs programs if they are eligible. For example, an eligible doctor participating in the ROMPs can apply for access to the higher VR items at a new practice through the AHOMPs. Information about OMPs program eligibility is available on the Department of Health website.

IF I AM CURRENTLY ON THE ROMPS, DO I NEED TO DO ANYTHING TO BE GRANDFATHERED?

No. If a doctor is already on an OMPs Program, there will be no change. Eligible doctors will be able to continue to claim the higher VR items up to 30 June 2023.

HOW WILL I CONTINUE TO ACCESS VR ITEMS AFTER 30 JUNE 2023?

The aim of this measure is to encourage vocational recognition through fellowship of a general practice college. A doctor who has obtained fellowship, or, who is participating in a formal pathway to fellowship through the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) or the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) will be able to access VR MBS items.

WILL I BE GIVEN SUPPORT TO WORK TOWARDS FELLOWSHIP?

As part of the Stronger Rural Health Strategy the Department is providing funding for a Fellowship Support Program to support non-vocationally registered (non-VR) doctors to attain fellowship. The Fellowship Support Program will be delivered through the RACGP and ACRRM and will be available between from 2019.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER 30 JUNE 2023, CAN I STILL CLAIM A MEDICARE BENEFIT?

Yes. Doctors who have an active Medicare Provider Number and are currently claiming Medicare benefits will be able to access the items for non-VR GPs.

Non-VR GPs working in Modified Monash 2-7 locations can access items from Group A7 of the MBS. These items are set at 80% of the equivalent VR GP items.

Non-VR GPs practising in metropolitan areas (Modified Monash 1) can claim:

- A2 items for standard GP services;
- A19 items for attendances associated with Practice Incentive Payments; and
- A7 items for all other relevant subgroups.



WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

For general OMPs policy enquiries –

The Department of Health: OMPs@health.gov.au

For application procedures and eligibility –

The Department of Human Services – Medicare:
provider.registration@humanservices.gov.au

For Fellowship enquiries –

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners: www.racgp.org.au

The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine: www.acrrm.org.au