

# VISITING OPTOMETRIST SCHEME



The Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV) is the fundholder for the Commonwealth Department of Health's Visiting Optometrists Scheme (VOS). VOS provides access to eye services for rural, regional and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The objective of the VOS is to improve eye health of people in regional, rural and remote locations by:

- Increasing optometry services in areas of identified need;
- Improving the coordination and integration of those eye health services and the quality of ongoing patient care; and
- Enhancing communication between visiting optometrists, local health providers and other visiting health professionals

To achieve this, the VOS provides funding to address a range of financial disincentives incurred by optometrists providing outreach services, including:

- Travel, accommodation, and meals
- Facility fees and administrative support at the outreach location
- Lost business opportunity due to time spent travelling to outreach locations
- Locum support at the home practice
- Lease and transport of equipment

The scheme improves coordination, integration, and communication through linkages with the planning and service delivery processes undertaken by State/Territory funded health organisations, primary health organisations, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector and other relevant stakeholders at the jurisdiction and at local level.

## Funding Eligibility

Funding is available for a range of expenses incurred by optometrists providing services including travel, accommodation, meals, facility fees and administrative support at the outreach location:

- Travel costs: airfares, car hire, mileage for hire car or use of personal car and taxi hire
- Accommodation: per night at ATO rates
- Meals Allowance: (per meal, at ATO rates): Breakfast, lunch, dinner, and incidentals
- Facility Fee: of up to \$200.00 per day
- Administration Support (daily rate): administrative costs associated with the delivery of outreach services, such as the organisation of appointments, processing of correspondence and follow up with patients, at the outreach location
- Professional Support (hourly rate): informal support provided by the visiting health professional to the general practitioner and/or other local health professionals
- Absence from practice allowance (AFPA) (hourly rate): An absence from practice allowance may be payable to participating optometrists to compensate for loss of business opportunity due to the time spent travelling to and from an outreach location to deliver VOS supported services
- Locum Support: An optometrist providing outreach services may be eligible to receive locum support at his/her principal practice. A maximum of 600 hours can be paid for locum support without prior approval of the Department (based on 60 days of outreach provision per year). Those claiming AFPA cannot claim for locum support
- Workforce Support: Under exceptional circumstances, the Department may agree to provide guaranteed financial support to optometrists who provide outreach in RA4 (remote) to mainly Indigenous communities
- Cultural awareness and safety training: support to undertake this training, if required
- Equipment lease: Subject to approval

## Funding is not available to support:

- Accompanying Optical Dispenser
- Standalone training
- Research activities
- Capital expenditure
- Purchase or leasing a motor vehicle
- Salaries for health professionals
- Hospital services

## Further Information:

You can find further information on the RWAV website including:

- Commonwealth Visiting Optometrist Scheme Service Delivery Standards
- RWAV needs assessment
- Visiting Optometrist Scheme Application Form
- Interactive Outreach Services Map
- How outreach programs are supporting communities

For further information or queries, please email [VOS@rwav.com.au](mailto:VOS@rwav.com.au) or call the RWAV office

