

RURAL HEALTH OUTREACH FUND (RHOF)

**NEEDS ASSESMENT
2022-23**



The Rural Health Outreach Fund (RHOF) program supports outreach health service delivery to improve health outcomes in regional, rural and remote locations (Modified Monash Model 3 – 7) (please refer to ‘Please note’ for more information regarding Modified Monash Model). The RHOF program supports identified health needs to broaden the choice of health services available. The RHOF program supports the following health priorities:

- maternity and paediatric health;
- eye health;
- mental health; and
- support for chronic disease management, including chronic pain management

Needs Assessment Methodology

A needs assessment was conducted between September 2021 and February 2022. This needs assessment utilised data from:

a. The RWAV 2021 Victorian Rural Health Workforce Census (RHW Census)

The RWAV 2021 Census is an online survey sent to health professionals in rural and remote regions of Victoria. The survey was optional and confidential for the participants and consisted of both quantitative and qualitative questions on health workforce access, quality and sustainability.

The RHW Census had 464 responses. This PHN region breakdown was: Murray (n=151), Western Victoria (n=149), Gippsland (n=108), North Western Melbourne (n=29), Eastern Melbourne (n=15), South Eastern Melbourne (n=8), Murrumbidgee (New South Wales) (n=3) and Country SA (South Australia). The response occupations were GPs (n=201), Allied Health Professionals (n=147), Non-GP Specialists (n=48), Nurses (n=44) and other persons engaged in health service delivery (n=24). These responses were analysed at the geographical area of Statistical Area Three (SA3) to identify hotspot locations and their associated needs. The location of the health professional's workplace was used to represent the SA3 that was being assessed and analysed. Health professionals reported on the types of health professionals they needed in their community and how often they were required. The identified need was based on the concordance of health professionals in that area as follows:

- A:** highest need based on concordance of 5 or more health practitioners
- B:** second highest need, based on concordance of 3-4 health practitioners
- C:** Third highest need, based on the concordance of 1-2 health practitioners.

Adjustments were made for small sample sizes and data triangulation, which are denoted by a *.

As part of the needs assessment process the findings of this census were confirmed with regional Health Workforce Stakeholder Engagement Groups to validate the findings and triangulate the data.

b. Australian Bureau of Statistics population data

Data on populations at SA3 level was included in ‘Priority Areas, Tables 1 – 4’ detailed in this document to enable those utilising the need assessment to validate and give context to the needs identified.

Data identified in this needs assessment was triangulated with confidential counts of number of health professionals by SA3 location (HeaDS UPP) and the number of services in an SA3 area (Healthmap).

Limitations

While the response rate of the Census was suitable to make deductions on the health workforce and its issues in rural and regional Victoria, RWAV aims for a higher participation and response rate for the Census. Some geographical locations were underrepresented in the Census due to low response rate, and RWAV sought to address these issues by sending personalised reminders to practices and participants to complete the Census.

Priority Areas

- Key:**
- **AH** is Allied Health.
 - **A** indicates concordance of 5 or more respondents from the respective SA3 area.
 - **B** indicates concordance of 3-4 respondents from the respective SA3 area.
 - **C** indicates concordance of 1-2 respondents from the respective SA3 area.
 - **Blank cells** are best interpreted as “No identified need at the time”.
 - *** (Star)** Indicates adjusted need level. Adjusted need level was calculated by taking the response order that the Census participants listed the needs and ranking them higher if mentioned first and/or integration with information from external sources has occurred.
 - **^ (Caret)** indicates that the region is partially eligible for the program due to MMM geographic boundaries. E.g. ‘Surf Coast - Bellarine Peninsula’ falls within MMM 1 to 5. If the program excludes MMM 1, only regions MMM 2 to 5 are eligible. See Health Workforce Locator map: www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/health-workforce-locator/health-workforce-locator

PHN	Gippsland					Murray										Western Victoria							Other			
SA3 Location	Baw Baw	Gippsland - East	Gippsland - South West	Latrobe Valley	Wellington	Campaspe	Heathcote - Castlemaine - Kyneton^	Loddon - Elmore	Mildura	Moira	Murray River - Swan Hill	Shepparton	Upper Goulburn Valley	Wangaratta - Benalla	Wodonga - Alpine^	Barwon - West^	Colac - Corangamite	Creswick - Daylesford - Ballan^	Glenelg - Southern Grampians	Grampians	Maryborough - Pyrenees^	Surf Coast - Bellarine Peninsula^	Warrnambool	Macedon Ranges	Yarra Ranges^	
ALLIED HEALTH																										
Aboriginal Health Worker	C	C*				C			B			C			C	C								B		
Allied Health Assistant		C		C	C				C							C			C	C					C	
Audiologist		C		C*	C*	C*			C*		C							C	C*	C*				C*		
Counsellor	B	B	A	C	C	C			C	C	C	B	C	C	B				B	A*			C			
Diabetes Educator	B	A			C	C			C		C*	B	C	C	B	B*		A	C	B		B	C	C	C	C
Dietitian	A	A	C	C	C	B			C	C	C	C	C	C	C		C	B	C	A	C	B	C*	C	A*	
Exercise Physiologist	B	A	C		C	B			C*		C	B	C	C	C		C		C	C	C	C				C
Nutritionist	C	C				C											C			C		C				
Occupational Therapist	C	A	C*	B	A	C	C	C*	A	C	B	C	B	C	B		B	B	A	A	C	C	C	C	A*	C
Optometrist	C	C	C*		C	C*			C*	C	C	C*	C*	C*	C	C*	C	C	C*	C	C	C*	C*			A*
Orthoptics			C																	C						
Physiotherapist	B	A	B*	B	B	A*			A*	C	B	C*	C	C	B		C	B	A	A		C	C	B	C	
Podiatrist	B	B	C	B	C	C*			C		C	C	C		B		C	C	C	A	C*	C*	B*	B*	C	

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Psychologist	A	A	A	A	A	C	A*		A	A*	A	A*	B	B	A		B	B	A	A	A*	A	A	A*	A*	
Rehabilitation Counsellor	C		C	C	C	C				C	C	C	B	C			C		C				C			
Social worker	C	B	B	C	B	C	C		B	C	B	B		B		C	C	B	A			B	C	C		
Sonography	C						C		C	C	C	B		C	C		C		C	C		C	C			
Speech Pathologist	A	A	C	C	A	C	C	C*	A	C	C	C*	B	C	B		B	C	A	A	C	C	B	C	C	
GENERAL PRACTITIONERS AND NURSING																										
GP Any	C*	A	A	B	B*		C		A	B	A	B	A	A	A	A*	A	C	A	A	C	C	B*			
GP Fellow		B	B	C	C				B	C	C	C					A*	C	A	A		C	C	C		
GP Locum	C	B	C	C			C				C			C	C	A*			B	C				C		
GP Registrar	C	B	B	C					A		C	C		C	B		B		B	B			C			
GP VMO		B							C	C	B			C	B		A*		A	A						
GP VR Practitioner		C	A				C		B	C	A	C	A	C	B				C		C			C		
Enrolled Nurse		C						C*	C					C	C				C	C	C	C				
Mental Health Reg Nurse	B	C	A	C	C*			C*	B	C	C	C	B	C	C	B*		B	B	A		C				

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Midwife		C	B				C	C*	B	C			C	C	C	A*				C						
Nurse Practitioner		B	A	C*	C		C	C*	B	C	B	C	C		C	A*				C	B	C				
Practice Nurse	C		C		C			C*	C			C	C		B		C	C	C	C		C				
Registered Nurse	B	B	B	C	C	C		C*	B	C	B		C	A*	C					C	B				C	
OTHER HEALTH SPECIALISTS																										
Addiction Medicine Specialist	C	C	B	B	C*	C*	C		B	C	C	B	C		C		C	C	B	B	C		C			
Echocardiographer	C					C			C	C*			C		C					C						
SPECIALISTS																										
Anaesthetist		C*									C									C*						
Cardiologist	C*	C*	C*	C*	C				C*	C*	C*	C	C*		C					C	C*	C*		C		
Dermatologist	C				C*				C			C*			C*					C*	C*					
Ear Nose Throat (ENT)		C		C*	C*	C*			C*		C*	C*	C*				C*			C*	C*			C*		
Endocrinologist		C			C*	C*						C			C*					C*				C*		
Gastroenterologist		C*			C								C*				C*				C					

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Geriatrics		C*			C				C	C*			C							C*				C		
Nephrologist		C*	C*		C*				C*	C*	C*								C*	C*						
Neurologist		C		C	C*				C*			C*					C*									
Obstetrics and Gynaecologist	C	B	C			C*			C	C	B	C	B	C	C		C			A				C		
Oncologist						C*			C*				C							C*						
Ophthalmologist		C*			C*	C*			C		C*		C*						C	C				C		
Orthopediatrician		C	C	C	C														C	C				C		
Paediatrician	C	B	A	C*	C*	C	B		A*	C	A	C	B	C	C*		B		C	B	C	C	C	C	C	C*
Psychiatrist	A	A	A	B*	B		C		A	C*	C	C	A	B	B		C		C	A		C	A	C	C	C
Rheumatologist		C*	C				C		C*																	
Surgeon		C	C	C	C				B	C	C		C		C		C		C	B				C	C	
Urologist		C*	C							C*		C			C				C*	C				C		

How this needs assessment will be used

RWAV will present the needs assessment and seek endorsement from the Victorian Outreach Advisory Forum (VOAF). All outreach service funding applications received by RWAV during the 2022-23 financial year will be reviewed in accordance with the service matrix and RWAV Outreach needs assessment.

To address the data gaps and limitations of the Census, further information provided in the 2022-23 Outreach Service Funding applications such as number of patients on the wait list, the wait time for new patients to be seen and more will be incorporated as part of the needs assessment. RWAV will review the regional health data provided to determine locations for priority recruitment of outreach services. This work is ongoing and will be communicated to VOAF in line with the Outreach Programs Service Delivery Standards during the financial year.

Please note

Modified Monash Model regions: The Modified Monash Model (MMM) 2019 has been updated to align with the latest available census data (2016). The model was developed to better target health workforce programs to attract health professionals to more remote and smaller communities. The MMM classifies metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas according to geographical remoteness, as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), and town size. You can find your MMM location here - <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/health-workforce-locator/health-workforce-locator>

Statistical Area Three (SA3) Localities: SA3s are generally designed to have populations between 30,000 and 130,000 persons. They have considerable flexibility in terms of population variability, allowing for the representation of meaningful regional areas for data analysis. In the rural context, SA3s are the functional areas of regional towns and/or cities with a population of at least 20,000 or clusters of related suburbs (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016).

References

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Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2016). Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS): Volume 1 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2016

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