



# Health Workforce Scholarship Program



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# 1. Grant Overview

The Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV) is a not-for-profit government-funded organisation focused on improving healthcare for rural, regional and Aboriginal communities in Victoria.

The Health Workforce Scholarship Program (HSWP) is part of the Australian Government Department of Health's Health Workforce Program Guidelines.

The HSWP is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and administered in Victoria by RWAV.

The purpose of the HSWP is to improve access to the services needed in rural and remote areas (defined as locations categorised as Modified Monash Model (MMM 3–7) by supporting an increase in clinical skills, capacity and/or scope of practice of privately employed health professionals in the fields of medicine, nursing and allied health.

HSWP funding is directly related to clinical training and upskilling within the field of the applicant's undergraduate qualification and is assessed on the relevance, value for money and the likelihood to meet identified primary healthcare needs of the community.

## 2. Eligibility

To be eligible for the HSWP you will need to meet **all** of the following criteria:

- a. Work as a health professional in the field of medicine, nursing or allied health (including Aboriginal Health Workers) in a role on the list of eligible health professions.
- b. Provide clinical services full or part-time in the private or non-government primary health sector (e.g. general practice, private allied health practitioner or a non-government agency), or provide (or can demonstrate that you are about to provide) primary health services in rural Victoria (MMM 3-7 locations) or an Aboriginal Medical Services or Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation in MMM 1-7 locations.
- c. Provide a minimum of 8 hours of clinical care per week.
- d. Propose to undertake clinical study or upskilling activities that will meet identified health needs in your community.
- e. Propose to continue working clinically in a rural Victoria MMM 3-7 location or Aboriginal Medical Services or Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation in MMM 1-7 locations, after completing your course (as there may be a requirement to complete a return of service agreement of 12 months after the course is completed).
- f. Provide details of your Medicare Provider number for your current work location (provider number) OR provide evidence that your employer is a private or non-government organisation (business ABN).

The following health professionals are **not** eligible to apply:

- Health professionals employed solely by any Government entity (Local, State or Federal)
- Employees who solely provide NDIS, HACC, etc. or any other government funded services
- Employees of hospices, unless the employee provides home based care
- Employees who solely provide telehealth

## List of Eligible Professions

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner
- Aboriginal Health Worker
- Audiologist
- Chinese Medicine Practitioner
- Chiropractor
- Dental Assistant
- Dental Hygienist
- Dental Practitioner
- Dental Prosthetist
- Dental Therapist
- Oral Health Therapist
- Diabetes Educator
- Dietitian
- Exercise Physiologist
- Medical Practitioner
- Medical Radiation Practitioner
- Midwife
- Nurse
- Nurse Practitioner
- Nutritionist
- Occupational Therapist
- Optometrist
- Orthoptist
- Orthotist/Prosthetist
- Osteopath
- Paramedic
- Pharmacist
- Physiotherapist
- Podiatrist
- Psychologist
- Social Worker
- Sonographer
- Speech Pathologist

### 3. Eligible Activities

All courses must meet the learning and community needs identified in the RWAV annual Health Workforce Needs Assessment.

Bursaries can be used for courses such as:

- Short courses, workshops, conferences and seminars
- Vocational education and training courses (e.g. Australian Skills Quality Authorisation (ASQA) recognised training packages)
- Training that meets the professional development requirements of the applicant's professional registration and/or association
- Recognised industry skills training and upskilling for individual health professionals
- Provisional Psychology supervision costs (must be completing either 4+2 or 5+1 internship program)
- Courses for exam preparation (medical practitioners only)

Courses and activities do not need to be accredited, but will be assessed by the relevance, value for money and the likelihood to meet identified primary healthcare needs of the community.

The activity must relate to clinical study or upskilling the applicant and be directly related to the role which makes you eligible for this grant. For example, if you work in both private primary practice and a public hospital, the activity must directly relate to your role in private primary practice. If the activity relates primarily to your hospital role then it would not be eligible.

### 4. Funding Available

The Health Workforce Scholarship Program will provide either:

- Bursary Payment – a payment up to \$10,000 (maximum of \$10,000 in total in one financial year) to support the cost of clinical upskilling, training or course fees, and related expenses such as accommodation and travel where appropriate.
- Scholarship Payment – a payment up to \$10,000 per financial year for up to two years to support full or part-time post-graduate clinical studies within Australia, up to a maximum of \$20,000 in total over two years.

All bursary activities must be completed by 30 June 2024. Scholarships may be provided for courses that extend beyond 30 June 2024 but the study period must conclude no later than 30 June 2027.

Applicants can make more than one bursary and/or scholarship application up to the total value of \$10,000 per financial year.

Limited scholarships and bursaries are available to support the development of health professionals in clinical leadership, including supervision and mentor training. These applications will be assessed taking into account the clinical nature of the course as well as the expected benefit to the community.

#### 4.1 Payment

Funding through the HWSP is via reimbursement. Grantees (successful applicants) are required to pay for the activities and associated costs, and then apply to RWAV for reimbursement.

Courses which are undertaken as “bundles” will be reimbursed one component at a time, on provision of a certificate of completion for each component.

Post-graduate courses will be reimbursed one semester at a time.

#### 4.2 Bursary Funding Amount

HWSP bursaries are payments that support the cost of clinical upskilling and training related expenses where appropriate.

Reimbursement for accommodation, airfares and car travel will be payable according to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) rates considered reasonable for domestic travel allowance expenses.

#### 4.3 Scholarship Funding Amount

Scholarships are single payments depending on the course that is being studied. Payments are awarded as a contribution towards the annual cost of the course.

<b>Postgraduate Qualification</b>	<b>Maximum Amount</b>
Graduate Certificate.....	\$5,000
Graduate Diploma.....	\$8,000
Masters or PhD.....	\$10,000

*If a course extends beyond one year, you must make a new application for the second year of funding.*

Scholarship funds only cover study fees and do not cover administration fees or any travel or accommodation costs relevant to undertaking the study.

Course costs which have been deferred to FEE-HELP or HECS-HELP are not eligible for reimbursement through HWSP.

## 4.4 Expenses Not Covered by the HWSP

Bursaries or scholarships will **not** be available for:

- Activities and related costs occurring before your application is submitted
- Overseas face-to-face expenses
- Resources such as text books, equipment (IT, clinical or diagnostic), software, memberships, subscriptions, exam fees, or similar
- Placement related costs (e.g. meals, accommodation, travel, wages lost, or similar);
- Travel and/or accommodation costs related to attending an exam
- Taxi/Uber etc. fares, transfers, parking fees, tolls, car rental fees or similar
- Upskilling where a course completion certificate or proof of attendance is not issued
- General supervision, mentoring, membership, accreditation fees, or similar costs to maintain your professional registration
- Study funded by other sources
- Activities for which other Commonwealth, State, or Local Government bodies have primary responsibility. This includes training for health professionals working solely in a public hospital or government funded entity
- Training unrelated to the applicant's primary degree is not eligible (e.g. management, personal self-improvement, marketing courses, re-training in a new career)
- Any other expenses that are deemed unreasonable by RWAV.

## 5. Application Process

Applications may only be made within 3 months of the start date of the activity.

All applications must be made through the MyRWAV portal accessed on the RWAV website.

Applications must be submitted by 11.59 pm on the day BEFORE the activity commences.

For self-paced online activities (such as GP exam preparation courses) applications must be submitted by 11.59 pm on the day BEFORE making payment for the activity.

You may be asked to provide more information to support your application.

*Submitting your application does not guarantee you will be successful.*

Applications will be assessed based on:

- a. The location of your employment (MMM 3-7 or MMM 1-7 if working in an Aboriginal Medical Service or Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation)
- b. Applicant eligibility criteria
- c. Professional development activity
  - Planned increase in skill capacity and/or scope of clinical practice; and
  - Meeting one or more identified primary health workforce needs; and
  - Demonstration of primary health service provision to rural and remote community.

### 5.1 Information Required in Application

#### 5.1.1 Proof of Employment in a letter that:

- Is on your employer's letterhead and from your immediate manager. If you are self-employed please provide your ABN and detail services provided, location/s, hours of service delivery (letterhead not required)
- Is dated and signed by the employer or business manager, within the last three months
- States your name as the applicant, including evidence of a name change if the receipt is not in your professional registration name
- States your position title
- States your employment status (full-time/part-time) and the number of clinical hours worked per week
- States the location of primary health services provided
- States the start date of employment in your present position



### **5.1.2 Anticipated costs**

As part of your **application** you will need to provide evidence of the anticipated costs of course fees (invoice or screenshot, noting that the activity does not need to be paid for at the application stage), and travel and accommodation (if required).

### **5.1.3 For Bursaries Only**

Once your grant has been approved, as part of your reimbursement claim you will need to provide a tax receipt (paid in full, noting that on-line cart receipts are not acceptable) with the following:

- Details of course/conference including dates and location;
- Name of attendee;
- GST;
- ABN of course/conference provider.

Reimbursement for accommodation and travel will be assessed against ATO reasonable travel allowance standards.

### **5.1.4 For Scholarships Only**

Official confirmation of enrolment or receipt of your university fees on university documentation for the post-graduate course specified in your application:

- This document must include all of the following:
  - o your name;
  - o the name of the course;
  - o the year of study;
  - o a list of the subjects in which you are enrolled.
- Generic information about course subjects cannot be accepted for payment;
- A letter of offer is not acceptable.

If enrolment confirmation is unavailable at the time of application, or you are waiting to receive notification of scholarship outcome prior to enrolling, you can upload details of the course you intend to enroll in and provide us with your enrolment confirmation when you receive it.

### **5.1.5 A brief statement addressing the following questions:**

- What is the health need that has been identified in your community?
- How will the local community benefit from your upskilling or training?

## 6. Notification of Applications

RWAV will notify you of the outcome of your application via email. Please note applications may take up to six (6) weeks to be assessed, approved and processed.

If your application is successful, we will email you a Grant Letter of Agreement for you to sign and return within 30 days. If RWAV does not receive your accepted Grant Letter of Agreement by the nominated date, the offer of funding will be withdrawn.

### **The Grant Letter of Agreement details:**

- The funded course/activity
- The amount of funding available
- Your requirements as a Grantee
- The debt recovery process in the event that you do not fulfill your obligations set out in the agreement
- The Return of Service Obligation (if applicable - see section 6.1 below)
- Information on payment process, including documentation required for evidence before we can reimburse you.

All claims for reimbursement and related documentation must be received by RWAV within 30 days of completion of the course. If claims for reimbursement and related documentation are not provided by the nominated date, RWAV will withdraw the offer of funding.

If your application is unsuccessful, RWAV will provide an explanation as to why your application has been declined.

### **6.1 Return of Service Obligations**

A Return of Service Obligation (RoSO) is required for applications receiving a scholarship/bursary equal to the value of \$5,000 or more, or for course/study (including online) longer than 6 months. In this case, the applicant must continue providing services in a MMM 3-7 location, or Aboriginal Medical Service or Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation in MMM 1-7 location for 12 months on completion of their course.

The RoSO will be clearly stated in your Grant Letter of Agreement with RWAV.

Where a health professional accepts a scholarship or a bursary and does not complete the required service obligations as stated in their contract, RWAV will recover the funding.

Applicants who are unable to meet their RoSO due to exceptional circumstances may be able to negotiate alternatives with RWAV. Exceptional circumstances are circumstances beyond the control of the applicant, which are not reasonably foreseen by the applicant at the time they entered into the contract, and which prevent the applicant from meeting their RoSO.

RWAV will seek to find alternatives to allow the applicant to meet their RoSO before a waiver will be considered. RWAV reserves the final right to hold the scholar to their RoSO and can recover the debt where a mutually agreeable outcome cannot be found.

## 6.2 Case management

Successful applicants who have a Return of Service Obligation will be case managed by RWAV throughout their scholarship/bursary activity.

Details of the case management to be provided will be stated in your Grant Letter of Agreement with RWAV.

## 7. Changes to Grant Activities

Written approval from RWAV is required to change the activity outlined in your Grant Letter of Agreement. RWAV will review any new activity against the identified health/workforce need, your original application and the reason for the change. Changes to a proposed activity are at the discretion of RWAV and usually only permitted where the training provider cancels the training, or under exceptional circumstances. RWAV reserves the right to cancel the Grant Letter of Agreement if the original activity cannot be completed.

## 8. Termination of Grant Letter of Agreement

RWAV may terminate a Grant Letter of Agreement if it reasonably believes the Grantee:

- Has transferred to a different activity without consent from RWAV
- Has breached the Grant Letter of Agreement
- Provided false or misleading information in their application
- Has failed to complete the activity
- Has failed to complete the RoSO (if applicable)
- No longer meets the employment criteria for grant eligibility

## 9. Debt Recovery

Where a Grantee does not fulfil their requirements as detailed in the Grant Letter of Agreement, RWAV may seek to recover the relevant monies.

Each Grantee will be asked to sign a Grant Letter of Agreement, confirming that they have understood the terms and conditions of the agreement including the process for debt recovery should the Grantee be unable to meet their obligations.

The Grants Officer will support the Grantee during the period outlined in the Grant Letter of Agreement to address issues as/before they arise. This will minimise the need for debt recovery in most cases. Where this fails, and the Grantee is unable to meet their obligations, the Grants Officer will contact the Grantee to inform them that the debt recovery process will begin.

## 10. Complaints and Appeals

Unsuccessful applicants who wish to appeal the outcome of their application should initially email the grants team at [HWSP@rwav.com.au](mailto:HWSP@rwav.com.au) to determine if they may be eligible to access funding and/or support from other sources to meet their upskilling or professional development needs. If the matter is not resolved applicants can appeal to the RWAV Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to consider their case. The RWAV CEO is the final arbiter for any appeal on the HWSP.

## 11. More information

Any questions relating to the HWSP in Victoria should be directed to the Grants Administrator at [HWSP@rwav.com.au](mailto:HWSP@rwav.com.au) or via phone on 03 9349 7800



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