

Rural Allied Health Support Program

Guidelines 2019-20

Introduction

The Rural Allied Health Support Program (the program) supports allied health practitioners working in public, primary and community health services in rural Victoria to access educational, professional and skill development opportunities that are relevant to the development and provision of rural health and human services and meet the needs of the community.

The program aims to improve access to health and human services for rural and regional Victorians through:

- improved access to professional development and education for allied health practitioners.
- building allied health workforce capabilities and quality.
- increased recruitment, retention and career progression opportunities for allied health practitioners.
- improved provision of allied health services that meet the health and wellbeing needs of the community.

The program is administered by the Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV) on behalf of the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (the department). RWAV is responsible for the management of program funding and ensuring that education/training accessed by program recipients addresses the needs of Victorian rural and regional communities.

Program funding

The program consists of two funding streams;

- Professional development, and
- Postgraduate study.

The program is designed to support and subsidise practitioners undertaking professional development and postgraduate study, as opposed to providing full cost recovery, which is reflected in these program guidelines.

In accordance with public funding guidelines, original receipts must accompany all program applications and subsequent funding claims.

The total funding pool available in 2019-20 is capped. In the event that program funding is exhausted before the end of the financial year, a notification will be posted on RWAV's website advising of this outcome.

Professional development

Applicants may apply for program funding to subsidise one or more of the following expenses:

Item	Eligible claim amount	Ineligible claim amount
Registration / course fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to 100% of the fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tertiary or VET qualification fees
Driving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calculated at \$0.66 per kilometre based on a return trip from the applicant's place of residence to the respective training location (and return).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stopovers or additional journeys are not covered.

Item	Eligible claim amount	Ineligible claim amount
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel subsidies are calculated via the most direct and practical route. 	
Air travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full cost of the cheapest economy airfare via the most direct route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs associated with car hire, parking, tolls, taxis, ride shares are not covered.
Accommodation expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to \$140 per night irrespective of location (rural or metropolitan) Accommodation must be sourced via a registered commercial premise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private accommodation or accommodation sourced via non-commercial premises will not be covered (e.g. Airbnb).
Childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to \$60 per day For a maximum of five days per year at a registered organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private childcare accessed via non-commercial premises will not be covered.

Funding conditions:

- Professional development funding is limited to \$1,000 per person in a single financial year.
- Professional development activities undertaken outside of Australia are ineligible for funding.
- Stand-alone requests for reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs (i.e. where registration/course fees have been funded separately) are ineligible for funding.
- Where a professional development activity was provided free of charge, the provision of subsidies for travel and accommodation costs will be contingent upon demonstration of clear learning outcomes and benefit to the community.

Postgraduate study

Applicants can apply for funding to subsidise the following postgraduate study costs:

Item	Eligible claim amount
Graduate Certificate	\$2,500
Graduate Diploma	\$5,000
Masters	\$7,500
PhD	\$10,000

Funding conditions:

- Funding is available for both discipline specific and non-discipline specific (e.g. health management, health promotion, public health studies) courses where they relate to the applicant's role and community need.
- Funding is only available for the first 12 months of study.
- Funding will be provided in two equal payments; 50% on successful completion of Semester 1 studies, 50% upon successful completion of Semester 2 studies.
- Funding is not available for professional-entry level (i.e. undergraduate) qualifications.

Eligibility

Individual applicants can only apply for funding under one program stream within the same financial year.

Applicants must be Australian Citizens and Permanent Residents working in:

- public, primary and community health services
- a rural and remote area of Victoria (MMM 2-7)
- permanent or contract roles who intend to commence an eligible postgraduate course in 2019-20.

Applicants must be employed in one of the following allied health professions:

Therapy Disciplines	Science Disciplines
Allied Health Assistant	Audiology
Art Therapy	Biomedical Science
Dietetics and Nutrition	Medical Physics
Exercise Physiology	Medical Laboratory Science
Music Therapy	Nuclear Medicine
Occupational Therapy	Optometry
Oral Health (not dentistry)	Orthoptics
Osteopathy	Pharmacy
Orthotics and Prosthetics	Radiation Therapy
Physiotherapy	Radiography
Podiatry	Sonography
Psychology	Social Work
Speech Pathology	

Applicants are not eligible for funding if they have already received funding support for the same professional development or postgraduate study activity from another source (for example, their employing organisation or the Commonwealth Government's Health Workforce Scholarship Program - HWSP).

Applications and administration

All applications must be made through the RWAV website, www.rwav.com.au.

By submitting an application, you are committing to the terms and conditions of these guidelines.

Successful applicants must repay funding in full if they fail to comply with the conditions of these guidelines.

	Professional development	Postgraduate study
Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications can be submitted throughout the 2019-20 financial year • Applications submitted must be for educational activities undertaken within the same financial year • Where the professional development activity falls in the last week of the financial year the applicant may complete the application form in advance but if funding is approved it will not be paid until after the activity has been completed 	
Notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in writing within two weeks of receipt of their submission. 	

	Professional development	Postgraduate study
Supporting information	<p>Applicants must submit the following supporting documents with their application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tax invoice demonstrating expenditure - Proof of attendance - Travel itinerary specifying flight details. 	<p>Applicants must submit the following supporting documents with their application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Curriculum Vitae - Letter of professional reference - 100 points of ID including a certified copy of birth certificate and/or passport - Evidence of employment - Proof of course enrolment - Copies of all paid invoices/receipts relating to course enrolment. <p>As well as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of successful completion of Semester 1 and 2 studies within two months of semester end.
Change of details	<p>Successful applicants must provide immediate notification (within one month of occurrence) of a change of contact or employment details and withdrawal from, or changes to, their course of studies.</p>	

Assessment

Applications are assessed against:

- eligibility criteria as outlined within the program guidelines
- relevance of education/training to the needs of Victorian rural and regional communities.

Applications must be deemed to be 'complete' to be considered for program funding – including provision of all relevant supporting documents.

Evaluation

By applying for and receiving funding via the Rural Allied Health Support Program, practitioners consent to participate in all program evaluation activities.

Applicants must complete the evaluation questions outlined in the application form.

RWAV may also contact applicants to obtain further evaluation data after receipt of funding support.

Contact

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Please be advised that these program guidelines are subject to revision without notice by the department.

Changes to these guidelines may only be made by, or with the approval of, the department.