



Australian Government

Department of Health

Flexible Fund Guidelines

RURAL HEALTH OUTREACH FUND

January 2014

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In the 2011-12 Budget, the Australian Government announced it would provide \$124.1 million over four years, commencing in 2011-12, to establish the Rural Health Outreach Fund (the Fund). This funding comes from the consolidation of five ongoing programs:

- The Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program (MSOAP)
- MSOAP – Ophthalmology expansion
- MSOAP – Maternity services expansion
- Rural Women’s GP Service
- National Rural and Remote Health - Kimberley Paediatric Outreach Program

The first competitive open funding round for the Fund will be held in 2012-13, with successful applicants to commence delivery of services from 1 July 2013. The Fund will undertake its outreach work through the use of auspicing organisations that will contract with health professionals to deliver outreach services.

The purpose of the open round will be to select applicants that are best placed to auspice the program – that is, to undertake planning, contract with health professionals to deliver services, coordinate the delivery of those services and report on the delivery of services and impact of the Fund programs.

It is expected that successful applicants will be offered a three year funding agreement. Highly performing Fundholders will be considered for contract extensions of up to three years. Competitive funding rounds may be held every three years.

Targeted funding rounds may be held from time to time. Targeted rounds will be used to respond rapidly to emerging priorities or significant unmet demands. Applicants that are successful through a targeted funding round will be offered a funding agreement that may vary from several months to up to three years.

The following table outlines the anticipated timeline for the program.

Milestone	Anticipated Dates
Rural Health Outreach Fund Announced	10 May 2011
Discussion Paper Released for comment	24 August 2011
Guidelines Published	July 2012
Applications Open	July 2012
Applications Close	September 2012
Assessment and Decision	December 2012
Services commence	1 July 2013

1.2 Fund aim, objectives and priorities

1.2.1 Aim

The aim of the Fund is to improve health outcomes for people living in regional, rural and remote locations by supporting the delivery of outreach health activities.

For the purpose of these Guidelines, regional, rural and remote locations are defined using the Australian Standard Geographical Classification – Remoteness Areas 2 (inner regional) to 5 (very remote).

Outreach health activities that may be supported through the Fund include:

- Specialist medical services;
- Allied health services;
- Midwife and nursing services;
- Combinations of eligible services (i.e. multidisciplinary teams);
- Outreach GP services, including support for female GPs to provide outreach services to broaden the health service choices available to rural women; and
- Administration and coordination of these services.

Funding is not available to support:

- elective cosmetic surgery;
- stand alone training;
- research activities;
- alternative health services – for example Chinese Medicine, reflexology etc; or
- the purchase of medical equipment.

1.2.2 Objectives

The Fund objectives are to:

- provide both public and private outreach health services that address prioritised community needs; and
- broaden the range and choice of health services available in regional, rural and remote locations.

The Fund will support outreach health activities to address health issues identified in regional, rural and remote locations, including through improved coordination and combination of health activities, and consolidation of access to female GPs.

It will do this through appointing auspice organisations, known as Fundholders, who will administer the Fund programs by supporting the travel, accommodation and other costs associated with health professionals who provide outreach. The support offered by Fundholders on behalf of the Fund may extend to backfilling salaried health professionals or providing funding for a locum for private health professionals, thereby reducing the financial disincentives that may otherwise result in a barrier to service delivery by the health professional.

1.2.3 Priorities

While the Fund supports general health needs in communities, the following priorities have been agreed by the Minister for Health (the Minister) for the first funding round of the Fund:

- Maternity and paediatric health;
- Eye health;
- Mental health; and
- Support for chronic disease management.

These Fund priorities, and the types of activities envisaged to be supported under them, are further described at [Attachment A](#).

The Minister may adjust the Fund Priorities from time to time to take into account evidence about the effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness of Fund activities, as well as respond to emerging needs of the Fund as identified through planning activities or the National Strategic Framework for Rural and Remote Health (the Framework).

Endorsed by Health Ministers in November 2011, the Framework provides a guide for all levels of government to enable a more consistent and coordinated approach for rural and remote health.

1.3 Background

The establishment of the Fund follows a strategic review of the administrative arrangements in the Health portfolio commissioned by the Government in 2010. The review identified an opportunity to improve the management of existing health care programs through consolidating them into larger, flexible Funds, in order to cut red tape for grant holders, increase flexibility, and more efficiently provide evidence based funding for the delivery of health outcomes in the community. Further information about the strategic review and the establishment of the flexible Funds is available on the Department's website at: www.health.gov.au.

1.3.1 Fund flexibility

The Fund is intended to be sufficiently flexible to continue to support the types of activities that have previously been supported under the various consolidated programs – subject to demonstrated evidence of their effectiveness and available funding – but in a more streamlined manner. The Fund will also support new rural, remote and regional health outreach priorities that may arise over time.

The Fund will include a small flexible funding pool that will ensure urgent emerging needs can be addressed in a timely way, while still providing certainty to Fundholders to enable them to plan services for delivery. This pool will also enable support for development of alternative service delivery models. Allocation of the Funds will be at the discretion of the Minister, but may be through a targeted funding round, or in response to a direct approach to the Fund.

The delivery of outreach services can be affected by a range of situations such as poor weather or the unavailability of health professionals. Where services have to be cancelled and cannot be made up, this funding may be identified as available to support the delivery of additional outreach services. In this situation, a targeted funding round may be announced to address an unmet need that has been identified or to address an emerging need. The funding agreement offered to successful Applicants may vary from several months to up to three years.

1.4 Review of the Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program and the Visiting Optometrists Scheme

In April 2011, Health Policy Analysis was contracted to undertake a comprehensive review of outreach programs offered through MSOAP and the Visiting Optometrists Scheme. Following announcement of the establishment of the Fund, the terms of reference of the review were broadened to ensure the recommendations could inform the development of the Fund.

The key issues that the review identified that have been reflected in these guidelines are to broaden the range of outreach services to include allied health and the use of multidisciplinary teams to provide a more comprehensive and coordinated outreach service that provides appropriate continuity of care for patients.

The review is available at www.ruralhealthaustralia.gov.au.

1.5 Fund scope and operating parameters

The Fund is intended to be broad in scope to enable it to support a wide range of activities for the purposes of strengthening the capacity of the primary health sector to deliver high quality outreach health services in regional, rural and remote locations.

As funding becomes available under the Fund, for example through circumstances outlined in 1.3.1 above, it may be re-allocated for Fund priorities and activities or to the flexible pool and then re-directed as set out in these Guidelines at Section 4.

The funding committed to particular Fund priorities and supported activities may be varied over time, to take into account:

- Availability of funding;

- Evidence of the effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness of Fund activities; and
- Emerging challenges.

The scope of the Fund suits delivery of services through a range of options. The following options will be considered:

- A single national provider of all services;
- Single providers of services within a specified jurisdiction – not being at a level lower than a single state or the Northern Territory;
- A provider seeking to deliver one (or more) of the priority areas nationally¹.

The Department of Health also reserves the right to seek targeted applications to address gaps in service delivery following selection of the successful applicants through the 2012-13 open round.

1.6 Roles and responsibilities

1.6.1 Minister

The Minister for Health will be responsible for setting priorities for the Fund, following advice from the Department of Health. These priorities will at all times reflect the aims and objectives of the Fund but may change over time to address emerging issues.

The Minister will consider recommendations from the Application Assessment Committee on applications to be a Fundholder. The Application Assessment Committee will be established within the Department of Health specifically to assess applications received from the open approach to the market.

The Minister will also consider options for allocation of the Flexible Pool.

1.6.2 Department of Health

The Department will be responsible for the development and dissemination of all Guidelines, operating manuals and application documentation under the Fund and for ensuring that such documentation is in accordance with the Fund aims and objectives.

The Department will be responsible for:

- managing the grants process and supporting the Application Assessment Committee that will assess applications and make recommendations to the Minister for consideration;
- notifying applicants of the outcomes of any grant process;
- responding to queries in relation to the grant process; and
- resolving any uncertainties that may arise in relation to application requirements.

The Department will also be responsible for all management and monitoring requirements of successful applicants in any process under the Fund such as:

- Developing funding agreements;
- Monitoring the performance of projects to ensure the conditions of the contractual arrangement are met;
- Assessing performance and financial reports and undertaking follow up activity as necessary;
- Making payments on acceptance of milestone reports as specified in the contractual arrangement; and
- Providing feedback to successful applicants on the overall project.

¹ Where a provider has been selected to deliver one or more of the priority areas nationally, other services will be supported through jurisdictionally based providers in each State and the Northern Territory.

The Department will review priorities under the Fund on an annual basis, taking account of the needs assessments provided by the Fundholders, and from that information will provide advice to the Minister on emerging needs.

The current priority areas reflect the implementation of the Maternity Services package in 2009-10 and the Eye Health outreach measure announced in the 2009-10 Budget, together with the areas where MSOAP provides the most significant levels of support. This will ensure that there will be minimal disruption to service delivery in the transition from MSOAP to the Fund.

1.6.3 Applicants

Applicants applying for grants through the Fund (see Section 2.1) are responsible for the development of their application and its lodgement in accordance with Departmental requirements. As part of any application process, applicants must ensure all information they provide is accurate and any mandatory requirements are met.

Applications that do not satisfy mandatory eligibility requirements will not progress for full assessment.

The Department will only enter into single funding agreements. If the successful applicant is a consortia there must be appropriate arrangements in place within the consortia to enable a single funding agreement to proceed.

Applicants must be prepared to meet the costs associated with the development and lodgement of their application.

1.6.4 Application Assessment Committee

The Application Assessment Committee is responsible for assessing applications received in accordance with the Assessment Plan and making recommendations to the Minister for consideration. Its membership, role and responsibilities will be detailed in the Assessment plan.

1.6.5 Successful Applicants (Fundholders)

Successful applicants, who will be known as Fundholders, are responsible for the efficient and effective planning, coordination, implementation and delivery of outreach services in accordance with the obligations contained in any funding agreement or contractual arrangement entered into under the Fund.

Planning for services is to be undertaken using a needs based planning methodology that identifies the needs of individuals, groups and communities. Consultations will be required with local communities and health service delivery agencies, for example Medicare Locals, to determine the level of need, appropriate responses and prioritisation to assist the Fund in directing services to locations with the greatest need.

Fundholders are also responsible for:

- Ensuring they meet the specifications of the funding agreement or other contractual arrangements;
- Ensuring the project is managed in a cost effective and efficient manner;
- Maintaining contact with the Department and advising of any emerging issues that may impact on the success of the outreach activities;
- Identifying and documenting risks and the appropriate mitigation strategies;
- Reporting on project performance and expenditure in accordance with the contractual obligations; and
- Assisting with evaluation activities.

1.7 Fund Timeframe

The Fund is an ongoing initiative from 1 July 2011. Transitional arrangements are in place in 2011-12 and 2012-13 to ensure outreach services continue under MSOAP and its expansions while Fund Guidelines are under development and during the period when applications are sought to deliver services under the Fund, with full implementation occurring from 1 July 2013.

Timeframes for specific activities may vary depending upon the application process. Timeframes for activities associated with the funding processes will be clearly specified in the application package for that process.

1.8 Fund value

The total value of funds available through the Fund from 2013-14 is anticipated to be approximately \$31 million per annum.

2 Eligibility

2.1 Who can apply for funding under the Rural Health Outreach Fund?

Applicants must be one of the following:

- National organisations;
- State level organisations;
- Consortia at either a State or National level, with one applicant within the Consortia nominated as the lead;
- Not for profit entities;
- Companies or Corporations; or
- State or Northern Territory Departments of Health

A maximum of only one applicant (including Consortia) will be appointed in each jurisdiction to deliver jurisdictional based services.

Medicare Locals may partner with other applicants to form Consortia. Where a cross border Medicare Local is part of a successful Consortia, the border of the Medicare Local will form the jurisdictional border for the purposes of contracting.

Applications to deliver either the full range of outreach programs or nominated priority services at the national level will be considered.

2.2 What is eligible for funding?

To be considered for funding, applications must propose to undertake activities that meet the aim, objectives and priorities for the Fund as stated in this document, and comply with the terms of the application documentation.

The Invitation to Apply and accompanying documentation will set out requirements of start dates and the notional level of funding available per annum. It is expected that successful applicants will be notified with sufficient lead time to enable delivery of services to commence from 1 July.

Retrospective items or activities will not be eligible for funding through the Fund.

While there are no mandatory skills required of applicants, a previous history in delivering outreach or similar services, or a demonstrated capacity to understand outreach service delivery, will be sought to ensure the applicant has the capacity to achieve the program aims and objectives.

3 Probity

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that the process for providing funding under the Fund is transparent and in accordance with these Guidelines. A separate Invitation to Apply document will be released for each individual funding process which will contain detailed guidance on the specific requirements for that process. These will not be inconsistent with these Guidelines.

Note: The Guidelines may be varied from time-to-time by the Australian Government as the needs of the Fund dictate. Amended Fund Guidelines will be published on the Department's website in advance of any grants process.

3.1 Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest may exist, for example, if the applicant or any of its personnel:

- Has a relationship (whether professional, commercial or personal) with a party who is able to influence the application assessment process, such as a Departmental staff member;
- Has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicant in carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently; or
- Has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain as a result of the granting of funding under the Fund.

Each applicant will be required to declare as part of any application process, any existing conflicts of interest or that to the best of their knowledge, there is no conflict of interest, including in relation to the examples above, that would impact on or prevent the applicant from proceeding with the project or any contractual arrangement it may enter into with the Australian Government.

Where an applicant subsequently identifies that an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest exists or might arise in relation to an application for funding, the applicant must inform the Department in writing immediately.

Members of the Application Assessment Committee and all individuals who assess applications will also be required to make a declaration of any potential or actual conflict of interest.

3.2 Confidentiality and Protection of Personal Information

As part of their application, each applicant will be required to declare their ability to comply with the proposed funding agreement arrangement to be entered into with the Australian Government. The specific clauses governing the confidentiality provisions of any grant process under this Fund will be contained in the contract that will form part of any grant application documentation available to potential applicants.

The Protection of Personal Information Clause within the Funding Agreement requires the funded organisation to:

- comply with the *Privacy Act (1988)* ('the Privacy Act'), including the 11 Information Privacy Principles (IPPs), as if it were an agency under the Privacy Act, and the National Privacy Principles (NPPs);
- refrain from engaging in direct marketing (s 16F of the Privacy Act), to the extent that the NPP and/or s 16F apply to the Funded organisation; and
- impose the same privacy obligations on any subcontractors it engages to assist with the Project.

The Confidentiality Clause in any subsequent contractual arrangement imposes obligations on the successful applicant with respect to special categories of information collected, created or held under the Agreement. The funded organisation is required to seek the Commonwealth's consent in writing before disclosing Confidential Information.

4 Fund Application Processes

4.1 Funding Streams

Access to funding from the Fund will be available through two funding streams. The Department proposes to undertake the following to achieve the aim, objectives and priorities for the Fund.

4.1.1 Open Grant rounds

Open, competitive, grant rounds will be held every three years.

Open rounds will open and close to applications on nominated dates, with eligible applications being assessed against the selection criteria set down for the Fund.

Successful applicants who perform at a high standard throughout the three year contract may be offered a contract extension of up to a further three years.

Applicants not offered an extension to the funding agreement will be required to reapply through an open round.

4.1.2 Targeted grant rounds

Funding may also be made available through targeted or restricted competitive funding rounds from time to time to meet the aim, objectives and priorities for the Fund.

These funding rounds may be open to a limited number of potential funding recipients due to the specialised requirements of the initiative or project under consideration. For example, a targeted funding round may be held to administer a service nationally, and in this situation may be of interest to a small number of applicants who are able to commit to deliver a national service.

4.1.3 Fund flexibility

Flexibility will be implemented through two means.

Firstly, a small flexible funding pool will be set aside within the Fund to enable the Fund to respond rapidly to emerging issues, significant unmet demands or to provide additional support following a natural disaster.

Secondly, Fundholder expenditure will be monitored throughout the year to identify potential underspends. Where significant underspends are possible, options will be explored with Fundholders to examine whether services, particularly in remote locations, can be provided with additional support.

From time to time, unsolicited applications are received to consider an emerging health need or trial a different model of service delivery. The flexible funding pool will enable consideration to be given to these applications.

These Fund Guidelines will form part of the Invitation to Apply documentation and must be met in all circumstances where grant or procurement arrangements are entered into under the Fund.

In urgent or unforeseen circumstances the Minister or Departmental Delegate has the right to waive eligibility criteria.

4.2 Application Process

A range of health outreach activities will be funded under the Fund. Each funding process will have comprehensive Invitation to Apply documentation developed that will detail at a minimum the following:

- The Fund Guidelines;
- How the initiative meets the aim, objectives and priorities of the Fund as specified in Section 1 of this document;
- Eligibility criteria as specified in Section 2 of this document;

- Procedures for submitting an application;
- Assessment criteria, specifically those relating to the activities being funded under the individual round;
- Assessment process;
- Amount of funding available;
- Timeline for funding;
- Proposed contractual arrangements, as specified in Section 5 of this document; and
- Contact officer for applicants.

A full suite of documentation will be provided with each funding process. Where possible, a minimum of one month's notice will be given to potential applicants of any proposed funding process. Such notice will include the broad objectives of the funding round, the level of funding available and the timeframe for funding and will be published on the Department's internet site at <http://www.ruralhealthaustralia.gov.au/> . Once advertised, the funding round will be open for a minimum period of six weeks from the date of the first advertisement appearing.

4.3 Decisions

4.3.1 Approval of funding

Following an appraisal of the application/s by the Application Assessment Committee established for that process, advice and recommendations will be provided to the Minister on the merits of the application/s. The final decision about the approval of a grant will be made by the Minister for Health or agency Chief Executive (including a Chief Executive delegate).

In making that decision, the Minister will consider whether the proposal will make an efficient, effective, ethical and economical use of Commonwealth resources, as required by Commonwealth legislation, and whether any specific requirements will need to be imposed as a condition of funding.

Funding approval is at the discretion of the Funding Approver.

4.3.2 Advice to applicants

Applicants will be advised by letter of the outcome of their application. Letters to successful applicants will contain details of any specific conditions attached to the funding. In accordance with the Commonwealth Grants Guidelines, grant approvals will also be listed on the Department's website. The Department will notify all unsuccessful applicants in writing.

4.3.3 Complaint handling

The Department's Procurement and Funding Complaints Handling Policy applies to complaints that arise in relation to a procurement or funding process. It covers events that occur between the time the requested documentation is released publicly and the date of contract execution, regardless of when the actual complaint is made. The Department requires that all complaints relating to a grant or procurement process must be lodged in writing. Further details of the policy are available on the 'About Us' page on www.health.gov.au .

Any enquiries relating to decisions on funding under the Fund should be directed to the Fund mailbox RHOF@health.gov.au .

5 Conditions of Funding

5.1 Contracting arrangements

Successful applicants funded under the Fund will be required to enter into a funding agreement or alternative contractual arrangement with the Commonwealth (represented by the Department).

A copy of the proposed contractual arrangement will form part of any material that forms the basis of a grant process under this Fund. Copies of the Department's standard Funding Agreement template is available as reference material at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-hotspots-guide-toc~mental-hotspots-guide-atb> .

5.2 Specific conditions

There may be specific conditions attached to the funding approval required as a result of the appraisal process or imposed by the Funding approver. These will be identified in the offer of funding or during contract negotiations.

5.3 Payment arrangements

Payments will usually be made on achievement of agreed milestones. Where payments are linked to the achievement of specific milestones, payments will only be made after the Department is satisfied that those milestones and associated obligations of the contractual arrangement have been met. The Department's standard trading terms are payment within 30 days of the receipt of the invoice.

5.4 Reporting requirements

Successful applicants will be required to provide progress reports on the agreed milestones. These progress reports may include funding acquittal requirements and program data. The timing of progress reports will be negotiated and form part of the final contractual arrangement. The format and framework for providing progress reports will take into account the size, cost and relative risks of the initiative/ project being undertaken by the funding recipient.

Reporting requirements will be detailed in the Invitation to Apply.

It is the intention of the Department to move to electronic lodgement of reports including program data.

5.5 Monitoring

Successful applicants will be required to actively manage the delivery of the activities. The Department will monitor progress against the funding agreement or contract through assessment of progress reports and by conducting site visits as necessary.

5.6 Evaluation

A post-implementation evaluation of the operation of, and activities supported by, the Fund will determine how the funding contributed to the objectives of the Fund. Successful applicants may be required to provide information to assist in this evaluation for a period of time, as stipulated in the funding agreement or contract, after funding has been provided.

6 Procurement activities

Funds appropriated for the purpose of the Fund may also be used for the procurement of work directly related to the purpose of the Fund e.g. Program Evaluation. Such Procurements will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth Procurement Rules and will be for purposes that are consistent with the aim, objectives and priorities of the Fund.

It is intended to undertake an evaluation of the activities and operation of the Fund in 2014-15.

7 Glossary of Terms

APPLICANTS – means any entity that applies for funding under the Fund.

OUTREACH SERVICES – are services delivered by health professionals working in a location that is beyond their current or usual limits – for the purposes of this program, their current or usual limits is defined as being physically distant from their primary or secondary place(s) of practice.

SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT - means any entity that has been successful in a funding process under the Fund.

THE FUND – means the RURAL HEALTH OUTREACH FUND as described in Section 1 of these Guidelines

FUNDING APPROVER- means the office or individual identified in any fund documentation as the decision maker in any process under the Fund, or the decision maker as delegated under the Chief Executive Instructions and the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997.

PROGRAM – means a pre existing grants program that has been subject to consolidation into the Fund.

ATTACHMENT A

Priority

Maternity and paediatric services.

Potential Activities

In order to support the delivery of maternity and paediatric services, the Department may fund a range of activities targeted at, but not limited to:

- support for health professionals to provide outreach maternity services to rural and remote communities;
- increase the range of maternity services offered by visiting health professionals to effectively support women and families through the antenatal and postnatal stage;
- improve ongoing management and continuity of care; and
- increase and maintain the skills of health professionals in rural and remote areas in accordance with local need.

Broad assessment requirements

The threshold level of assessment for any grant application will be to determine the capacity of the applicant and the proposed project to meet the aim and objectives of the Fund and to support activities that deliver outreach maternity health services to regional, rural and remote locations. Applications that do not satisfy the threshold criteria will not proceed for assessment against the specific criteria.

A comprehensive set of documentation detailing the specific assessment criteria of this process will form part of the Invitation to Apply process. These specific criteria relate to the activity that is the subject of the grants application process eg :

- The ability of the applicant to undertake a needs based planning process to enable identification of community needs and work with an Advisory Forum to prioritise those needs;
- The relevance and effectiveness of the proposal to assist the targeted community/ies;
- Demonstration that the project is supported by the nominated community/ies;
- Complete details of the Project Plan and Budget Projections; and
- Details of the applicant's capacity to implement the project within the proposed timeframe.

Priority

Eye Health

Potential Activities

In order to support the delivery of eye health services, the Department may fund a range of activities targeted at, but not limited to:

- Support for eye health professionals to provide outreach services to rural and remote locations across Australia;
- Increase the number of eye health services, particularly cataract surgery and treatment of diabetic retinopathy, provided in rural and remote Australia;
- Foster collaboration between health services and health professionals in the local community and visiting eye health professionals to support ongoing management and continuity of patient care; and
- Increase and maintain the skills of rural and remote health professionals in relation to eye health.

Broad assessment requirements

The threshold level of assessment for any grant application will be to determine the capacity of the applicant and the proposed project to meet the aim and objectives of the Fund and to support activities that deliver outreach eye health services to regional, rural and remote locations. Applications that do not satisfy the threshold criteria will not proceed for assessment against the specific criteria.

A comprehensive set of documentation detailing the specific assessment criteria of this process will form part of the Invitation to Apply process. These specific criteria relate to the activity that is the subject of the grants application process eg :

- The ability of the applicant to undertake a needs based planning process to enable identification of community needs and work with an Advisory Forum to prioritise those needs;
- The relevance and effectiveness of the proposal to assist the targeted community/ies;
- Demonstration that the project is supported by the nominated community/ies;
- Complete details of the Project Plan and Budget Projections; and
- Details of the applicant's capacity to implement the project within the proposed timeframe.

Priority

Mental health services

Potential Activities

In order to support the delivery of mental health services, the Department may fund a range of activities targeted at, but not limited to:

- increase visiting mental health services in areas of identified need;
- support health professionals to provide outreach mental health services in rural and remote areas;
- improve ongoing management and continuity of care; and
- increase and maintain the skills of mental health professionals in rural and remote areas in accordance with local need.

Broad assessment requirements

The threshold level of assessment for any grant application will be to determine the capacity of the applicant and the proposed project to meet the aim and objectives of the Fund and to support activities that deliver outreach services to regional, rural and remote locations. Applications that do not satisfy the threshold criteria will not proceed for assessment against the specific criteria.

A comprehensive set of documentation detailing the specific assessment criteria of this process will form part of the Invitation to Apply process. These specific criteria relate to the activity that is the subject of the grants application process eg :

- The ability of the applicant to undertake a needs based planning process to enable identification of community needs and work with an Advisory Forum to prioritise those needs;
- The relevance and effectiveness of the proposal to assist the targeted community/ies;
- Demonstration that the project is supported by the nominated community/ies;
- Complete details of the Project Plan and Budget Projections; and
- Details of the applicant's capacity to implement the project within the proposed timeframe.

Priority

Chronic disease management

Potential Activities

In order to support the management of chronic disease in regional, rural and remote locations the Department may fund a range of activities targeted at, but not limited to:

- support health professionals to provide outreach chronic disease management services to regional rural and remote Indigenous communities;
- increase the range of services offered by visiting health professionals to detect, manage and prevent chronic disease more effectively;
- foster collaboration between health services in the local community and visiting health professionals to target the delivery of essential treatment to patients with chronic disease;
- improve ongoing management and continuity of patient care;
- provide up-skilling opportunities in the outreach location; and
- work with communities to build knowledge and support informed self-care.

Broad assessment requirements

The threshold level of assessment for any grant application will be to determine the capacity of the applicant and the proposed project to meet the aim and objectives of the Fund and to support activities that deliver outreach services to regional, rural and remote locations. Applications that do not satisfy the threshold criteria will not proceed for assessment against the specific criteria.

A comprehensive set of documentation detailing the specific assessment criteria of this process will form part of the Invitation to Apply process. These specific criteria relate to the activity that is the subject of the grants application process eg :

- The ability of the applicant to undertake a needs based planning process to enable identification of community needs and work with an Advisory Forum to prioritise those needs;
- The relevance and effectiveness of the proposal to assist the targeted community/ies;
- Demonstration that the project is supported by the nominated community/ies;
- Complete details of the Project Plan and Budget Projections; and
- Details of the applicant's capacity to implement the project within the proposed timeframe.