



Tasmanian  
Government

# Rural General Practice Settlement Incentive (RGPSI) grant program

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### Background

Tasmania like most regional areas in Australia is experiencing challenges in attracting and retaining the health workforce required to support the health system. The Tasmanian Government is focused on creating and sustaining a health professional workforce that provides efficient and effective care consistent with the best evidence and community needs. Action 1.07 of the *Health Workforce Strategy 2040* is to rebuild the rural generalist workforce in rural and remote Tasmania to align the workforce with community health needs.

In 2024, the Tasmanian Government committed to attracting up to 40 new GPs to rural and regional Tasmania and aims to provide incentives of up to \$100,000 over five years for GPs who choose to settle in prioritised regional locations and is consistent with *Tasmania's Long Term Health Plan 2040*.

These Guidelines have been prepared to describe the eligibility requirement, service requirements and administration guidelines. The Application form is on the HR plus website.

### Definitions

For the purposes of these Guidelines,

**ACRRM** is the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine.

**Administrator** is the Department of Health.

**Ahptra** is the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

**District Hospitals** and those services known as **Multipurpose Centres** in Tasmania may provide emergency care, admitted care, including acute and subacute care, residential aged care, allied health care, radiology services, community Health services and outreach services, Mental health and child health services, and may provide clinics from visiting consultants.

**Priority Criteria** means the practices and locations listed under **Priority 1,2** and **3** within these guidelines.

**FTE** means Full Time Equivalent. One FTE is equal to the number of hours a Full-time employee works for an organisation. “**Full time** general practice experience comprises a 38-hour minimum working week, over a minimum of four days per week, of which a minimum of 27 hours must be in face-to-face, rostered, patient consultation time undertaking general practice activities. Work periods of less than three consecutive hours, or of less than one month in any one practice, will not be considered. Hours worked beyond this definition of full time will not be considered”. ([RACGP - Assessment of General Practice Experience](#)) For the purposes of the RGPSI all GP work, including as a THS employee such as a Rural Generalist working in a secondary and tertiary healthcare setting, will be counted toward the FTE calculation.

The **Fellowship Support Program (FSP)** is a self-funded education and training program to support non-vocationally registered doctors on their journey to Fellowship. It includes self-directed learning, in-practice learning, and workplace-based assessments (WBAs) for feedback and progress monitoring. It is administered either by the RACGP or the ACRRM

**GP** means a vocationally registered and fully qualified General Practitioner registered by AHPRA who provides comprehensive, patient-centred, whole-person and continuous care, including preventative health care, acute and chronic disease diagnosis, and management.

## GP ATTRACTION INCENTIVE

**Grant** means RGPSI grant. It includes four payments made by the Tasmanian Department of Health to a successful applicant in accordance with these Guidelines.

**Grant Agreement** means an agreement formed between a successful applicant and the Tasmanian Government.

**Grant Period** means the 5-year period in which the four instalment payments are distributed to the successful applicants as outlined in this guide.

**Health Workforce Needs Analysis Priority Areas** are areas identified by the People Project that have immediate health workforce needs.

**MMM** refers to the Modified Monash Model that defines whether a location is metropolitan, rural, remote, or very remote. Regions within MMM 2 (regional centre) to MMM 7 (very remote communities) inclusive, are included in this program.

**The People Project (formerly HR Plus Tasmania)** is the name used by General Practice Workforce Inc and is a not-for-profit incorporated association contracted by the Australian Government to recruit and retain general practitioners, nursing, and allied health professionals in Tasmania, with an emphasis on rural and remote communities.

**RACGP** is the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

**Tasmanian Department of Health (DoH)** represents the State of Tasmania for the purposes of these Guidelines.

**The Tasmanian Government** or the Government of Tasmania is the executive branch of the Australian State of Tasmania.

## Program Overview

The program aims to attract GPs to Tasmanian regional rural and remote areas (MMM 3-7) particularly to District hospitals and Multipurpose Centres; and to select locations in MMM2 regions, such as New Norfolk District Hospital Service and current Health Workforce Needs Analysis priority practices.

The maximum total worth of the grant is \$ 100,000 per person in staggered payments contingent on fulfilment of service.

The Program is for GPs (Fellows and Vocationally Registered General Practitioners) who do not require supervision.

The Doctors involved will be required to work at least 0.5 FTE for 47 weeks to achieve the payment for the preceding year. The payment will be pro rata for the FTE worked and provided at the end of each year.

The payment schedule will be flexible and negotiated with successful applicants as follows:

- Up to \$30 000 upon signature of the agreement
- Up to \$50 000 total by the end of the first year of service
- Up to \$65 000 total by the end of the second year of service
- Up to \$80 000 total by the end of the third year of service

## GP ATTRACTION INCENTIVE

- Up to \$90 000 total by the end of the fourth year of service
- Up to \$100 000 total by the end of the fifth year of service

Within the payment schedule, participants can opt to receive reimbursement of relocation costs and continuing professional development (CPD). These must not exceed the totals outlined in the payment schedule above.

What is eligible for relocation cost reimbursement?

- Travel expenses (private motor vehicle use, economy class airfares)
- Removalist expenses for transfer of furniture and personal effects

What is eligible for CPD reimbursement?

- CPD relevant to your role as a general practitioner
- May include workshops, conferences, short courses, graduate certificates, diplomas, postgraduate qualifications and other activities as approved by the RGPSI assessment panel
- Includes cost of the CPD activity
- Travel associated with CPD activity (if flights, economy class)
- Accommodation associated with CPD activity
- Excludes CPD opportunities outside Australia
- Excludes CPD opportunities already funded by alternate programmes, such as the Health Workforce Scholarship Program

## Contractual arrangement

The People Project has been contracted by the Administrator to provide recruitment services, program promotion, participant support, and analysis of participants' reasons for entry to and exit from this program. The People Project will recruit suitable recipients according to the eligibility requirements and forward applicant details to the Administrator who will provide funds after evidence of successful completion of work requirements according to these Guidelines. Up to 40 GPs can receive this incentive.

## Program Duration

5 years.

## Eligibility

GPs must be recognised by Ahpra as registered specialist General Practitioner and hold a current provider number, and where required evidence of credentialing.

Specialist GPs who commenced working in an eligible area after 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2024.

GPs who obtained Fellowship after 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2024, and are located in an eligible location, and who are not leaving the practice they have trained in and are in Priority Groups 1, 2 and 3.

Applications from Tasmanian GPs wishing to change locations within Tasmania will be considered by the Administrator but may not be approved. The Administrator will consider the reasons for the request, exceptional circumstances, risks and benefits to Tasmania, sustainability of healthcare

provision and other factors as appropriate. It is important to note that threshold for approval of such requests will be high as that is not the purpose of this grant.

### Priority criteria

#### Priority One

Specialist General Practitioners who join a Practice in rural or regional Tasmania which services a District Hospital, a Multipurpose Centre or Services, who provide rural state funded urgent and admitted care and who participate regularly in their medical roster of care, will receive a pro rata settlement incentive distributed over four years, provided they continue to do this. The maximum grant total is \$100 000.

Practices involved include:

- Ochre Medical Centres at Scottsdale, Smithton, Queenstown, Zeehan and Strahan, King Island, Flinders Island, Campbell Town, St Helen's, St Mary's, Bruny Island.
- Derwent Valley Medical Centre
- Swansea General Practice
- Dover Medical Centre and the associated Geeveston Medical Centre
- Beaconsfield Family Medical Practice
- Tasman Medical Practice
- George Town Medical Centre
- Deloraine Medical Centre
- Oatlands Surgery

\*\* where new General Practices are established during the program the Administrators maintain discretion to include them in the Program.

#### Priority Two

Practices from Priority One group (if the GP is not participating in THS patient care) and the following practices\*\*:

- Bothwell Doctors
- Sheffield Medical Centre,
- Dr Merran Dyer Practice Sheffield
- Cohealth Triabunna
- Central Highlands Medical Centre (currently closed) or replacement practice for the town however named.
- Cohealth Bicheno

## GP ATTRACTION INCENTIVE

\*\* where new General Practices are established during the program the Administrators maintain discretion to include them in the Program.

### Priority Three

Doctors settling in MMM 3-7 practices other than those in Priority 1 and 2.

Doctors settling in MMM2 practices that are identified as Health Workforce Needs Analysis (HWNA) priority areas. Examples of these practice locations in the 2025 HWNA include Snug, Risdon Vale, Bridgewater, Dodges Ferry and Lauderdale.

## Ineligible Applicants

GP in training.

Doctors who are part of the FSP but have not completed eligibility requirements.

Specialist GPs who were already living and working in eligible locations in Tasmania prior to 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2024

Previous recipients of the Rural General Practice Settlement Incentive program, including those who elected to exit the program early.

## How to Apply

The Grant will be provided to successful applicants on recommendation from The People Project to the Administrator who will enter an Agreement with the successful applicant.

Please use the online application form on The People Project website ([Rural General Practice Settlement Incentive grant program | HR+](#)). As part of the application process, applicants must agree that they are aware of the requirements of the Program Guidelines

By submitting an application form, applicants agree that if they are successful, they will be bound by a Grant Agreement between themselves and an Administrator.

If the application is successful, applicants will be notified via email. This will form an agreement between the successful applicant and the Administrator. on the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement.

If an applicant is successful in applying for the GP Grant program, the applicant will need to provide banking details for the Grant to be paid.

## Assessment of Applications and Claims

The successful applicant will be required to confirm that they meet the eligibility criteria at the time of application.

Applications will be assessed at the end of each month until all positions are filled.

The successful applicant may be requested to provide further information to assist in the assessment of their application or claim. The Administrators reserve in their absolute discretion the right to refuse an application or claim and the right not to make a payment where eligibility criteria are not

met, or where the applicant does not or cannot provide sufficient information in the required timeframe to assess whether eligibility criteria have been met, or where a claim cannot be supported.

### Duration of Contract Management

The payments will be provided on evidence of completion of at least 0.5 FTE for 47 weeks at the end of each year. The contract is for 5 years of provision of service.

The Administrator agrees that on a case-by-case basis for compassionate or parenting leave reasons a pause in contract requirements may be negotiated provided that the five years of services is ultimately provided. It is the responsibility of the applicant to accurately inform the Department of Health of changes to their practice location, working hours, or of extended leave (>4 weeks) throughout the term of the RGPSI agreement. This will enable transparency of changes to RGPSI payments which are pro-rata and linked to the approved eligible location. The Department of Health will request this information from successful applicants prior to the agreed anniversary date of the RGPSI agreement.

### Privacy Statement

Information the applicant provides for the RGPSI Grant Program, including personal information, will be collected by The People Project and the Administrator to assess eligibility, and to administer claims and payments.

By applying for a Grant, applicants consent to the sharing of information as outlined in the Terms and Conditions. The Administrators may also contact Ahpra, the RACGP, ACRRM, the recipient's place of employment (with complete transparency) and the recipient to clarify and confirm their submitted information, and for program review, reporting, monitoring, audit, and evaluation purposes.

Any personal information about the applicant will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed, or transferred and stored in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy and Data Protection

### Other Information

During the course of the Grant Program if the successful applicant withdraws from the practice/service or does not maintain eligibility requirements the applicant will not be eligible for subsequent instalments.

If the successful applicant does not comply with the full contractual arrangement, then the applicant will be required to refund any amount paid.

The successful applicant must supply the Administrator with evidence of compliance with the Grant and agree to collection of such demographic and workforce data to satisfy audit requirements of the Department of Health.

The successful applicant agrees to respond to surveys related to rural workforce incentives if required but not more than twice per year for evaluation of this program.

The Tasmanian Department of Health reserves the right to amend these Guidelines and Application terms at any time as it deems appropriate (subject to appropriate notice being given either by publication on the Department of Health and The People Project websites, or by email to applicants).

## GP ATTRACTION INCENTIVE

If an unsuccessful applicant considers that their application has been incorrectly assessed for the program, they may contact the Administrator for advice.

Payments under the RGPIS are not subject to Pay As You Go (PAYG) withholding tax. Recipients are advised to seek professional advice in respect of their taxation obligations from their personal financial adviser, accountant or the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) regarding the receipt of the Grant payments.

## Contact Us

The People Project **Tasmania**

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### **Administrator**

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