Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory (SFNT) – Health Remote Area Health Corps (RAHC)

Grant Programme Guidelines
Grant Programme Process Flowchart

APPLICATION
Applicant completes an application

SUBMIT AN APPLICATION
Applicant submits an application

APPRAISAL
The application is accepted. The application is assessed against eligibility and selection criteria

ADVICE TO THE APPROVER
Advice is provided to the Approver on the merits of each application against the Programme Guidelines and application requirements

DECISION/NOTIFICATION
The Approver makes a decision on the assessment outcomes of each application and the applicant is advised of the decision

CONTRACT/FUNDING
An agreement is negotiated and signed by the applicant and the department

DO/CLOSE/ACQUIT
Applicant undertakes activity, completes milestones and provides reports including end of agreement grant assessment requirements.
Department makes payments and monitors progress

EVALUATION
Department evaluates the outcomes of the Programme. Applicant provides information to assist this evaluation
1 Introduction

1.1 Programme Background

The Remote Area Health Corps (RAHC) commenced operations in 2008 under the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory (NT) initiative. On 29 March 2012, the Australian Government announced the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory (SFNT) – Health package. From this package, the Australian Government is providing approximately $50.298 million over seven years from 2015-16 to 2022-23 for the RAHC Programme to continue to address critical workforce shortages in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory (NT).

RAHC funding for 2015-18 is approximately $19.674 million. You can find more information about the SFNT – Health package on the Department's website.

The funding recipient will operate a single entity “the RAHC”. The RAHC will liaise with approximately 70 health service providers in the NT, including both Northern Territory Government and community controlled health providers that service remote Indigenous communities.

The Remote Area Health Corps (RAHC) website outlines their work around the primary health care for Indigenous Australians’.

1.2 Programme Purpose, Scope & Objectives

1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the RAHC Programme (the Programme) is to contribute to closing the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by increasing access to primary health care services in remote Indigenous communities in the NT through addressing critical workforce shortages in those communities.

1.2.2 Scope

The Programme is targeted at recruiting urban based health professionals from around Australia, credentialing them, provide them with professional development and training, and filling at least 450 short-term placements per year in remote Indigenous communities in the NT where there are critical health workforce shortages.

1.2.3 Objectives

The Programme’s objectives are to:

1. consult with Indigenous health service providers in the NT about their workforce needs;
2. attract and recruit urban-based health professionals to take up short-term placements in remote Indigenous communities in the NT;
3. credential the health professionals which have been attracted and recruited;
4. ensure appropriate, Central Australian Rural Practitioners Association (CARPA) Standard Treatment Manual (current edition) guided training, cultural orientation, and Work Health and Safety training relevant to remote and isolated work is completed by the recruited health professionals; and
5. deploy those health professionals to remote Indigenous communities on short-term deployments of up to 3 months.
1.3 Relevant legislation

The Programme draws its administrative authority from the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs) that are issued by the Minister for Finance under the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act). The legal authority for the grant is Section 23 of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 and Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Act 1997 Section 32(b). Schedule 1AA Part 4 section 415.026 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

Department of Health staff involved in grants administration are accountable for complying with the CGRGs, the PGPA Act and other policies and legislation that interact with grants administration.

1.4 Roles and Responsibilities

The Grant Programme Process Flowchart on page three outlines the roles and responsibilities of each party.

Department

The Department manages the Programme. It is responsible for the development and dissemination of all documentation regarding funding under the Programme and for ensuring that all documentation is in accordance with the objectives. It is also responsible for notifying applicants of the outcome of any funding process, responding to queries in relation to the funding process, and for resolving any uncertainties that may arise in relation to funding requirements.

The Department is responsible for decisions regarding the internal administration, assessment, recommendations and programme management arrangements. These include:

- assessing the applications;
- developing funding agreements or any alternative contractual arrangement;
- monitoring the performance of projects to ensure that the conditions of the funding agreement or other contractual arrangement are met;
- assessing performance and financial reports and undertaking follow up activity as necessary;
- making payments as specified in the funding agreement or contractual arrangement; and
- providing feedback to funded organisations during the funding period and following the conclusion of activities.

Assessment Committee

An Assessment Committee will be established by the Department to assess applications against the selection criteria and select the shortlisted applicants for consideration by the Approver. Assessment of the applications may require specific advice from subject experts, including external experts.

Approver

The Approver will consider whether the proposal will make an efficient, effective, ethical and economical use of Australian Government resources, as required by Commonwealth legislation, and whether any specific requirements will need to be imposed as a condition of funding.

The final decision about the approval of funding will be made by the Minister or agency Chief Executive (including a Chief Executive’s delegate). Funding approval is at the discretion of the Approver.
The Approver for the Programme is:

- Assistant Secretary, Indigenous and Rural Health Division, Department of Health.

**Funding Recipient**

The Organisation, (can be a consortia lead organisation), that receives funding is responsible for the efficient and effective delivery of the activities in accordance with the obligations contained in any funding agreement or contractual agreement entered into under the Programme.

The Organisation will also be responsible for:

- ensuring that the terms and conditions of the funding agreement are met and that the project is managed in a cost effective and efficient manner
- ensuring the activity achieves value with relevant money
- employing and managing project staff
- maintaining contact with the Department and advising of any emerging issues that may impact on the success of the activity
- identifying, documenting and managing risks and putting in place appropriate mitigation strategies
- ensuring outcomes and output reporting in accordance with the funding agreement
- participating in activity evaluation as necessary.

### 1.5 Risk Management

The Department is committed to a comprehensive and systematic approach to the effective management of potential opportunities and adverse effects. Any contractual arrangement may be managed proportional to its level of risk to the Commonwealth. As such, applicants and funding recipients may be subject to a risk management assessment prior to the negotiation of any contractual arrangement and periodically thereafter.

The inclusion of Supplementary Conditions, which could override and/or amend and/or impose additional terms to the Standard Funding Agreement, may be included for organisations with a risk rating of medium or above.

Consistent with the responsibilities described under Section 1.4, the organisation receiving funding is responsible for managing risks to their own business activities and priorities. The Commonwealth manages risk to the RAHC Programme Funds and outcomes through its management of the grant.

### 1.6 Programme Timeframes

The Programme’s Guidelines are publicly available and form part of the Approach the Market (ATM).

Specific timeframes for any funding process will be provided in the ATM documentation for that process and will be available on the Department's website.
The following table outlines the anticipated timelines for the Programme funding process:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014-15 Milestones</th>
<th>Anticipated Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATM opens</td>
<td>June 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATM closes</td>
<td>Six weeks after open date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected provider approved</td>
<td>3-4 weeks after closing date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful provider informed</td>
<td>6-8 weeks after closing date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Eligibility

2.1 What Entities are Eligible to Apply for Funding?

The following types of entities may be eligible to apply for funding. For operational reasons a grant process may restrict eligibility to a subset of the list below. In any case an entity eligibility list will be provided in the approach to market documentation for that process.

- Incorporated association incorporated under Australian State/Territory legislation
- Incorporated cooperative incorporated under Australian State/Territory legislation
- Aboriginal corporation incorporated under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006
- Organisation established through specific Commonwealth or State/Territory legislation
- Company incorporated under Corporations Act 2001 (Commonwealth of Australia)
- Partnerships
- Trustee on behalf of a trust
- An Australian Local government body
- An Australian State/Territory government

2.2 Consortia

The Department encourages organisations to form collaborations, consortia or partnerships to deliver activities. If more than one organisation will be involved in the application, one organisation must be identified as the lead organisation and an authorised representative of the lead organisation must sign the application form.

2.3 What is Eligible for Funding?

Funding must be consistent with the purpose, scope, and objectives and include activities supported under the RAHC Programme as articulated in these Guidelines.

Activities eligible for funding include:

- undertaking recruitment activities to attract urban-based health professionals, including general practitioners, nurses, and allied and oral health professionals
credentialing

• cultural orientation and training to ensure professionals possess an awareness of Indigenous cultures and cultural respect

• training and orientation to prepare professionals for deployment to remote Australian environments

• clinical training which is guided by the CARPA Standard Treatment Manual (latest edition) and other relevant companion manuals

• short-term deployment to remote Indigenous communities in the NT where critical need has been identified including deployment to and from their home to the deployment location

• consulting widely with existing health service providers in the NT to ascertain their workforce requirements and maintain RAHC workforce placement plans to meet these requirements

**What is not eligible for funding?**

- capital works;
- the purchase or repair of equipment or motor vehicles;
- retrospective items/activities;
- activities undertaken by political organisations; or
- activities that subsidise commercial activities.

### 3 Probity

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that the process for providing funding under the RAHC Programme is transparent and in accordance with published Guidelines.

**Note:** Guidelines may be varied from time-to-time by the Australian Government as the needs of the SFNT – RAHC Programme dictate. Amended Guidelines will be published on the Department’s website.

A Departmental probity officer may be part of the assessment process and will be available for expert advice.

#### 3.1 Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest may exist if Departmental staff, any member of an advisory panel or expert committee, and/or 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 officer;
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants 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 SFNT – RAHC Programme.

Each party will be required to declare as part of their application, 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 funding agreement it may enter into with the Australian Government.

Where a party subsequently identifies that an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest exists or might arise in relation to this application for funding, external parties must inform the Department in writing immediately. Departmental staff or members of any advisory panel or expert
committee must advise the chair of the assessment panel. Conflicts of interest will be handled in compliance with Departmental policies and procedures.

Conflicts of interest for Departmental staff will be handled in compliance with the Australian Public Service Commission policies and procedures.

### 3.2 Confidentiality and Protection of Personal Information

Each applicant will be required to declare as part of their application, their ability to comply with the following legislation or contractual clauses that it may enter into with the Australian Government.

The Protection of Personal Information Clause, which requires the funding recipient 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); and
- impose the same privacy obligations on any subcontractors it engages to assist with the activity.

The Confidentiality Clause, which imposes obligations on the funding recipient with respect to special categories of information collected, created or held under the funding agreement. The funding recipient is required to seek the Department’s consent in writing before disclosing confidential information.

Further information can be found in the terms & conditions of the funding agreement available on the Department’s website.

### 4 Type of Application Process

#### 4.1 Access to Funding

Eligible organisations are able to apply for RAHC Programme funding through one or more of the below processes:

The bulk of the grant funding will be available through:

**Open competitive grant rounds**

Open competitive funding rounds, which will open and close to applications on nominated dates, with eligible applications being assessed against the selection criteria and then prioritised against other eligible applications for the available funding.

Other opportunities may be available through:

**Targeted grant rounds**

Funding through targeted competitive funding rounds will open and close on nominated dates. These grant rounds will be open to a small number of potential funding recipients based on the specialised requirements of the initiative or project under consideration.

**One-off/ unsolicited funding**

 Provision will be made under the flexible Fund/Grant Programme for one-off, unsolicited proposals, and emergency payments, provided that they meet the aims, objectives and priorities of the flexible Fund/Grant Programme.
Procurement

Funds may also be used for the procurement of work directly related to the purpose of the Grant Programme. 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 objectives and priorities of the Grant Programme.

5 How to Apply

5.1 Application Process

The Department has established a division that is focused on managing and administering grants. Specialised assessment sections have been formed with staff that has a high level of training and expertise in the assessment process. An Assessment Committee will be convened by this grant assessment section with a staff member from the relevant policy section to assess applications against the selection criteria and select shortlisted applicants.

5.2 Obtaining an application pack

The ATM documentation may consist of an Invitation to Apply or a Request for Proposal. Applicants may obtain an application form from the Department’s Tenders and Grants internet page. The application is included in the Invitation to Apply. For targeted rounds the Invitation to Apply or Request for Proposal will be supplied to the applicant.

5.3 Application requirements

Applications should be submitted to the Department by the date specified in the ATM documentation and should meet all the requirements in the ATM documentation. Applications must be submitted on the official application form as specified in the ATM documentation.

The eligibility and assessment criteria are outlined in the Approach to Market documentation. It is important to complete each section of the application form and use the checklist to make sure each requirement has been considered.

6 Assessment

6.1 Assessment process

An Assessment committee will be established by the Department to assess applications against the selection criteria and select the shortlisted applicants. Any non-APS members or independent advisers invited to provide expert advice to the Assessment Committee will be treated as agency staff as per Part 1, section 2.8 of the CGRGs.

Stage 1 – Eligibility Criteria

Each applicant must satisfy all Eligibility Criteria in order to be considered for further assessment. This will be determined by the Assessment Committee.

Stage 2 Assessment Criteria/Policy Priority and Value for Relevant Money

The Assessment Committee will undertake assessment of applications and will consider the applicant’s response to each assessment criterion. The assessment against the criteria will be used to identify the applicant with the capability to best meet the policy priorities of the Grant Programme and who will best deliver value for relevant money.
6.2 **Assessment Criteria**

Applications for funding under the Programme will be assessed against the criteria outlined in the ATM documentation. Criteria will incorporate the following principles:

- Achieving Government policy
- Capacity
- Effectiveness
- Outcomes and benefits
- Value with relevant money
- Cultural sensitivity

7 **Decisions**

7.1 **Approval of Funding**

Following an assessment of the applications by the Assessment Committee, advice will be provided by the Assessment Committee Chair to the Approver on the merits of the application/s.

The Approver 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 Approver.

7.2 **Advice to Applicant**

Applicants will be advised by letter of the outcome of their application. A letter to the successful applicant will contain details of any specific conditions attached to the funding. Funding approvals will also be listed on the Department’s website. The Department will notify all unsuccessful applicants, in writing, after execution of agreement.

7.3 **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 request 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 the funding process must be lodged in writing. Further details of the policy are available on the ‘About Us’ page on the Department’s internet site.

Any enquiries relating to funding decisions for this Programme should be directed to Grant.ATM@health.gov.au

8 **Governance and Accountability**

8.1 **Contracting arrangements**

The successful applicant will be required to enter into a standard funding agreement with the Commonwealth (represented by the Department). The ATM documentation will include the standard terms and conditions of the funding agreement. These cannot be changed but additional supplementary conditions may apply. Organisations should not make financial commitments in expectation of receiving funding until a funding agreement has been executed.
The Department will negotiate with the successful applicant with the aim of having the funding agreement signed within 2 to 4 weeks of the approval.

The funded organisation must carry out each activity in accordance with the agreement, which will include meeting milestones and other timeframes specified in the schedule for that activity. Activities must be carried out diligently, efficiently, effectively and in good faith to a high standard to achieve the aims of the activity and to meet the Programme’s objectives.

### 8.2 Specific conditions

There may be specific conditions attached to the funding approval required as a result of the assessment process or imposed by the Approver. These will be identified in the offer of funding or during funding agreement negotiations.

### Transition arrangements

Successful applicant will be notified as soon as possible to allow an establishment and transition period of up to three months. All RAHC branding and intellectual property (including all current training modules) will be supplied to the new organisation.

### 8.3 Payment arrangements

Payments will be made in accordance with the funding agreement.

The default invoice process for the Department is Recipient Created Tax Invoices (RCTI).

### 8.4 Reporting requirements

The funded organisation must provide the Department with the reports for an activity that contains the information, the times and the manner specified in the funding agreement. Specific reporting requirements will form part of the funded organisation’s agreement with the Department. These could include:

- Quarterly progress reporting;
- Annual expenditure reports; and
- Final report.

### 8.5 Monitoring

The funding recipient will be required to actively manage the delivery of the activity under the Programme. The Department will monitor progress in accordance with the funding agreement.

### 8.6 Evaluation

An evaluation by the Department will determine how the funded activity contributed to the objectives of the Programme. The funding recipient will be required to provide information to assist in this evaluation for a period of time, as stipulated in the funding agreement, after funding has been provided.

An independent evaluation was conducted in 2011 as part of the Child Health Check Initiative and the Expanding Health Service Delivery Initiative.
8.7 Branding

The RAHC programme logo is designed to be used on all publications related to the activity. All publications related to the activity are required to recognise the Australian Government, use the Australian Government logo, and are to be designed in accordance with the Australian Government Branding Guidelines.