



# Fact Sheet: Strengthening Medicare - Workforce Incentive Program-Rural Advanced Skills

April 2024

THIS FACT SHEET PROVIDES INFORMATION ON THE STRENGTHENING MEDICARE – WORKFORCE INCENTIVE PROGRAM –RURAL  
ADVANCED SKILLS PAYMENT

## Background

In the October 2022 Budget, the Government provided \$74.1 million over four years from 2022-23 to provide a new Workforce Incentive Program (WIP) payment for GPs and Rural Generalists with advanced skills working in rural and remote communities. Payments commenced in January 2024, recognising services delivered during 2023, 2024 and 2025.

## What is the purpose of the Program?

The WIP-Rural Advanced Skills payment aims to support access to health care in rural and remote communities (Modified Monash [MM] 3-7 locations) by providing additional annual incentive payments to GPs working in primary care and using advanced skills in a range of other settings.

The new incentive rewards investment in GP specialist qualifications, accredited training and credentials. It encourages more doctors with these advanced skills to work in rural and remote areas. It encourages GPs to consider the [National Rural Generalist Pathway](#) and Rural Generalists to broaden the range of services they provide to patients in rural communities.

This Rural Advanced Skill payment adds to the incentives offered through the WIP-Doctor Stream and WIP-Practice Stream.

## Who is eligible for the Program?

To be eligible for WIP-Rural Advanced Skills payment, GPs must:

- provide Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) rebatable primary care services in a MM 3-7 location using a current eligible Medicare Provider Number for the location that services are provided;
- meet minimum service thresholds related to both primary care and advanced skill services provided in other settings;
- have supporting documentation to substantiate their application (proof of advanced skill and employer verification of services delivered); and
- have their individual bank account details registered with Services Australia through the [Health Professional Online Services](#) (HPOS) to enable payment.

## How much are the WIP-Rural Advanced Skills payments?

The WIP-Rural Advanced Skills payment recognises that doctors working in rural areas are often required to use additional advanced skills (procedural and non-procedural) to meet the health care needs of their communities.

A GP could earn up to \$21,000 in a year in additional incentive payments in recognition of their work both in primary care and in community and/or hospital settings. The incentive payments:

- increase based on rurality to reflect different workforce and health facility profiles in different areas
- increase with the number of advanced skill services delivered and
- require minimum service thresholds for general practice services to be met.

The new payments consist of two separate payment streams, as follows:

- **Stream 1: Emergency Medicine** – from \$4,000 up to \$10,500 per annum for doctors providing a minimum level of emergency care and emergency after hours services (in eligible locations).
- **Stream 2: Advanced Skills** – from \$4,000 up to \$10,500 per annum for doctors who hold recognised qualifications in advanced skills (such as obstetrics, anaesthetics, surgery, mental health and/or First Nations Health) and provide a minimum level of service in this skill area.

The WIP-Rural Advanced Skills payment is for services delivered between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2025. GPs are eligible for up to three payments for services during 2023, 2024 and 2025.

Eligible doctors and Rural Generalists **are able to claim for one or both payment streams** if they meet eligibility requirements and reach service thresholds.

More information on this and payment levels by remoteness and stream is in Table 1 below.

Detailed information is provided in the [WIP-Rural Advanced Skills Guidelines](#). These, along with Frequently Asked Questions, are available on the Department of Health and Aged Care's website ([www.health.gov.au/our-work/workforce-incentive-program](http://www.health.gov.au/our-work/workforce-incentive-program)).

## How do I apply?

An online application form is available from the Department of Health and Aged Care's [website](#).

WIP-Rural Advanced Skills payments are made by Services Australia's [Health Professional Online Services](#) (HPOS) system. If you are expecting to meet eligibility and service thresholds and are currently not using HPOS for individual doctor payments, you are encouraged to contact Services Australia to arrange this before applying.

**Table 1: WIP-Rural Advanced Skills: minimum primary care service thresholds, annual payment amounts by stream, incentive level and remoteness**

Primary Care minimum service thresholds			
MM3-7	<b>Full-time doctors</b> (working 0.6 FTE and above overall across multiple settings) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>96 primary care rosters</li> </ul>	<b>Part-time doctors</b> (working up to 0.6 FTE overall across multiple settings) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>48 primary care rosters</li> </ul>	
WIP-Rural Advanced Skills Incentives			
Stream One: Emergency Medicine services			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emergency Medicine services provided in a hospital, Medicare Urgent Care Clinic or Multi-Purpose Service setting</li> <li>Emergency After Hours in primary care services, where no hospital is within 50 kms (by road)</li> </ul>			
	Payment Level A	Payment Level B	Payment Level C
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11 emergency/emergency after hours rosters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22 emergency/emergency after hours rosters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>48 emergency/emergency after hours rosters</li> </ul>
MM3	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
MM4-5	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$9,500
MM6-7	\$9,000	\$10,500	\$10,500
Stream Two: Rural Advanced Skills services			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adult Internal Medicine</li> <li>Anaesthesia</li> <li>First Nations Health (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health)</li> <li>Mental Health</li> <li>Obstetrics and Gynaecology</li> <li>Paediatrics and Child Health</li> <li>Palliative Care</li> <li>Remote Medicine</li> <li>Small Town Rural General Practice</li> <li>Surgery</li> </ul>			
	Payment Level A	Payment Level B	Payment Level C
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11 advanced skills rosters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22 advanced skills rosters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>48 advanced skills rosters</li> </ul>
MM3	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
MM4-5	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$9,500
MM6-7	\$9,000	\$10,500	\$10,500

**Note:**

One roster is 4 hours or longer in a 24-hour period.  
 96 primary care rosters are equivalent to 2 days per week (11 months per year).  
 Advanced skills rosters are based on one, two and four rosters per month (11 months per year).  
 Doctors working 0.6 FTE and above, in total across all employment settings, are considered full-time.  
 Payment values increase based on rurality and number of advanced skill services delivered.  
 Minimum service thresholds for each payment level differ due to MM location due to different workforce profiles and community needs.  
 Pro-rata payments are not available for doctors that have not reached minimum service thresholds for each payment level.