



General Practice Sustainability and Viability Initiative Guidelines 2024

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General Practice Sustainability and Viability Initiative

The Tasmanian Government is committed to work in collaboration with the Australian Government to strengthen the primary care sector in Tasmania and support access in thin market areas. The General Practice Sustainability and Viability Initiative (the Initiative) enhances that commitment.

The Initiative aims to support general practices in rural and regional areas, and in some cases those in outer urban areas where particular disadvantage or significant need can be demonstrated, to strengthen and sustain their business and service models to improve the sustainability and viability of the practice for the benefit of all Tasmanians.

The first grant round, for which applications open on 3 August 2024, will provide a funding allocation which will be announced in the upcoming Tasmanian Budget for the 2024-25 financial year. Grants will be for a fixed period of up to two years. The maximum grant available is \$250 000 per business, per annum (i.e., a maximum amount of \$500 000 per business over two years). More detail on the structure of grant funding is provided at Section 3 of these guidelines.

The timeframes for future grant rounds will be announced at a later date. For future grant rounds, preference may be given to applicants that have not received funding under previous rounds.

This document provides guidance for applicants.

I Eligibility Criteria

Applicants may be asked to supply documentation to support their eligibility claims, as part of the application process or as part of an audit process.

To be eligible for the grant, applicants must:

- be owners and operators of a physical, bricks and mortar, general practice and/or be owners and operators of a mobile general practice that utilises General Practitioners to provide patient care.
- have current RACGP accreditation.
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN).
- demonstrate the ability to maintain ongoing compliance with the *Commonwealth Health Insurance Act 1973*, particularly Section 19(2) which prohibits the payment of Medicare benefits where other government funding is provided for, or in some way assists, the medical service(s) provided.
- be located in rural, regional and where particular disadvantage or significant need can be demonstrated, outer urban areas of Tasmania.

Meeting the eligibility criteria does not guarantee your business will receive a grant. It allows your application to proceed through to the next stage, where it will be competitively assessed against the Assessment Criteria.

Proposals that may be considered under the Initiative include, but are not limited to:

- innovative models of patient care, particularly those that improve ongoing access to services for Tasmanians living in rural and remote communities. For example, the use of nurse practitioners.
- provision of outreach services that provide support to communities/patient cohorts in rural and remote areas or particular disadvantage or need.
- capital works projects (including building, equipment, IT) which show an ongoing benefit to the local community post completion and support sustainability and viability.
- major software or hardware upgrades.
- professional development to enhance services e.g., support staff getting qualified certificate iii/iv/diploma courses or post graduate training for nursing or allied health staff.

2 Assessment Criteria

Applicants that meet the Eligibility Criteria will then need to address the Assessment Criteria.

Applications will be assessed on merit, and it is therefore essential that applicants provide sufficient commentary and supporting documentation for each Assessment Criteria. Applications will be assessed based on the quality of information provided by the applicant. If suitable information is not provided the application may be declined.

Applications will be assessed by a panel comprising experienced members of the Tasmanian acute and primary health care sectors. The panel will consider the mix of initiatives and state-wide coverage across all eligible applications and determine an order of merit. Once the assessment process is complete, all applicants will be informed in writing with general feedback. Please note that not all eligible grant applicants may receive funding.

All applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- **Criteria 1:** Improved access to services for communities/patient cohorts living in rural and remote areas, or other areas of particular disadvantage or significant need:
 - preferential order as follows:
 1. general practices located in Modified Monash Model (MMM) 3 or higher.
 2. general practices located in MMM 2, with preference given to:
 - a. general practices that can demonstrate the provision of supports and benefits to communities located in MMM 3 areas (or higher).
 - b. general practices located within areas of particular disadvantage or significant need.
- **Criteria 2:** Sustainability and viability:
 - the impact of the proposal on the long term sustainability of the business, with the capacity to demonstrate sustainable and viable business and service models beyond the term of the grant funding. Examples of supporting documentation include income projections related to new or expanded revenue streams and current and long-term business plans.
- **Criteria 3:** Strategic alignment to the Priorities for Action outlined in the *Long-Term Plan for Healthcare in Tasmania 2040*.
 - the Long-Term Plan for Healthcare in Tasmania 2040 can be found at <https://www.health.tas.gov.au/publications/long-term-plan-healthcare-tasmania-2040>
- **Criteria 4:** Value for money:
 - Proposals must demonstrate an appropriate balance between cost, quality, and outcomes, with the ultimate aim to optimise health benefits for patients within the available resources.

3 Funding

The first grant round, for which applications open on 3 August 2024, will provide a funding allocation which will be announced in the upcoming Tasmanian Budget for the 2024-25 financial year.

Grants will be for a fixed period of up to two years. The maximum grant available is \$250 000 per business, per annum (i.e., a maximum amount of \$500 000 per business over two years).

Grant funding will be allocated across three Tiers as follows:

Tier 1 grants. The total funding available will equal 15 per cent of the funding allocation which will be announced in the upcoming Tasmanian Budget for the 2024-25 financial year. Tier 1 grants are for applications with a value of up to \$50 000. Tier 1 grants will be provided on a once-off basis.

Tier 2 grants. The total funding available will equal 60 per cent of the funding allocation which will be announced in the upcoming Tasmanian Budget for the 2024-25 financial year. Tier 2 grants are for applications with a value between:

- \$50 001 and \$100 000 on a once-off basis, or
- up to \$100 000 per year for two years (a maximum of \$200 000).

Tier 3 grants. The total funding available will equal 25 per cent of the funding allocation which will be announced in the upcoming Tasmanian Budget for the 2024-25 financial year. Tier 3 grants are for applications with a value between

- \$100 001 and \$250 000 on a once off basis, or
- up to \$250 000 per year for two years (a maximum of \$500 000).

Eligible applications for all three Tiers will have their proposals assessed against the Assessment Criteria. Funding will be allocated to those applicants that are assessed by the panel as best meeting the Assessment Criteria based on the information provided. Tier 1 and 2 applicants will be advised at this stage if they are successful for a grant.

After the initial panel assessment, successful Tier 3 applicants will be invited to progress to the next stage of the assessment process and asked to submit a Business Case within six weeks. Tier 3 applications with the overall strongest proposition in terms of their strength of alignment to the Assessment Criteria will progress through to the Business Case phase of the application process.

For each grant round, if the funding for any of the three Tiers is not fully allocated it may be re-allocated between Tiers if the need exists.

For each grant round, if combined funding across all three Tiers is not fully allocated the unallocated amount may be allocated to a future grant round.

Applicants can only submit one application for grant funding, except in cases where multiple service locations are being operated under a single ABN.

Joint applications with another business will be considered, however only one applicant can apply. Applications can be part of a joint venture, but the lead applicant will need to be identified.

3.1 Funding Period

Funding commences upon the successful applicant executing a legal funding agreement with the Department of Health and may be for any period of up to two years.

4 Timeframes

An indicative timeframe for the Initiative is outlined below. Applications will not be considered if submitted after the closing date and time.

Tier 1 and Tier 2 Applicants

Description	Date
Applications open	3 August 2024
Applications close	11:59pm, 8 September 2024
Applications competitively assessed	September 2024*
Tier 1 and Tier 2 applicants notified of decision	September/October 2024*
Negotiation and execution of Funding Agreement	October/November 2024

* The evaluation, notification execution periods may vary, depending on the number, complexity and volume of submissions received.

Tier 3 Applicants

Description	Date
Applications open	3 August 2024
Applications close	11:59pm, 8 September 2024
Applications competitively assessed	September 2024*
Tier 3 applicants notified of decision	September/October 2024*
Tier 3 applicants invited to submit a Business Case (6 weeks provided)	November 2024*
Business cases competitively assessed	December 2024*
Negotiation and execution of Funding Agreements	December 2024

* The evaluation, notification execution periods may vary, depending on the number, complexity and volume of submissions received.

5 Grant Payments

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement with the Department of Health. As part of that process successful applicants will be required to:

- undergo a due diligence assessment by the Department of Health.
- provide relevant corporate details, including bank accounts, governance arrangements etc.

If a grant recipient's:

- circumstance changes,
- does not complete the activities or tasks required under the funding agreement,
- does not use any or all of the funding provided, or
- the information provided is found to be false or misleading.

the recipient will be required to return some or all of the funds to the Department of Health.

6 Taxation and Financial Implications

The receipt of funding from this program may be treated as assessable income for income tax purposes by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

It is strongly recommended that prior to submitting an application, applicants seek independent advice from a tax advisor, financial advisor and/or the ATO about the possible tax implications for receiving the grant.

7 Acquittal

An acquittal is a statement made by a grant recipient confirming that the grant funding was used as per the funding agreement. Unless otherwise stated, it is a requirement that all Department of Health grants are acquitted and signed off by an authorised auditor.

8 Publicity of Grant Assistance

The Department of Health disburses public funds and is therefore accountable for the distribution of those funds. As part of the accountability process the Department of Health, Minister for Health, or State Government, may publicise:

- the level of financial assistance,
- the identity of the recipient,
- the purpose of the financial assistance, and
- any other details considered by the department or State Government to be appropriate.

9 Right to Information

Information provided to the Department of Health may be subject to disclosure in accordance with the *Right to Information Act 2009*.

10 Confidentiality

The Tasmanian Government may use and disclose the information provided by applicants for the purposes of discharging its respective functions under the Initiative Guidelines and otherwise for the purposes of the program and related uses.

The Department of Health may also:

- use information received in applications for any other departmental business,
- use information received in applications and during the delivery of the project for reporting purposes,
- use information received in applications as described in Publicity of Grant Assistance, and
- as required otherwise by law.

11 Personal Information Protection

Personal information will be managed in accordance with the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*.

This information may be accessed by the individual to whom it related, on request to the Department of Health.

12 Disclosure

The following applies to all successful applicants:

- despite any confidentiality or intellectual property right subsisting in the grant Funding Agreement, a party may publish all or any part of the grant Funding Agreement without reference to another party.
- all obligations under the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004* or the *Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988* still apply.

13 Disclaimer

Although care has been taken in the preparation of this document, no warranty, express or implied, is given by the Crown in Right of Tasmania, as to the accuracy or completeness of the information it contains.

The Crown in Right of Tasmania accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage that may arise from anything contained in or omitted from or that may arise from the use of this document, and any person relying on this document and the information it contains does so at their own risk absolutely.

The Crown in Right of Tasmania does not accept liability or responsibility for any loss incurred by an applicant that are in any way related to the program.

14 Compliance

Successful applicants must ensure ongoing compliance with all laws, regulations etc, including but not limited to:

- the *Commonwealth Health Insurance Act 1973*, particularly Section 19(2) which prohibits the payment of Medicare benefits where other government funding is provided for, or in some way assists, the medical service(s) provided.
- relevant taxation law.
- employment and enterprise bargaining agreements.
- local council approvals and regulations.

15 Administration and contact details

The program will be administered by the Department of Health on behalf of the Crown in the Right of Tasmania.

More information and queries can be directed to primaryhealth.caregrants@health.tas.gov.au

16 Application Process

Order	Activity	Guidance to applicants
Step 1	Check that your business qualifies for funding	Read these Guidelines in full, paying particular attention to the Eligibility Criteria.
Step 2	View the key dates and plan your application	Ensure you are able to meet timeframes and deadlines.
Step 3	Write application	The Department of Health recommends that you tailor your application to the Eligibility Criteria and Assessment Criteria. Ensure you address each criterion in full.
Step 4	Attach evidence	Evidence supports and strengthens your application. Some examples of evidence include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a project or business plan. • letter(s) of support. • impact of equivalent services elsewhere. • assessments of effectiveness in local community.

Order	Activity	Guidance to applicants
Step 5	Submit	Submit your application before the closing date and time. Late applications will not be accepted.
Step 6	Assessment	Applicants are not required to do anything in this phase. The Department of Health may contact applicants if clarification of any element of an application is required. Applicants are able to answer those questions but are unable to add elements to their original submission.
Step 7	Results	Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application once the assessment process is complete. Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement with the Crown in Tasmania, represented by the Department of Health.

Department of Health

Email: primaryhealth.caregrants@health.tas.gov.au

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