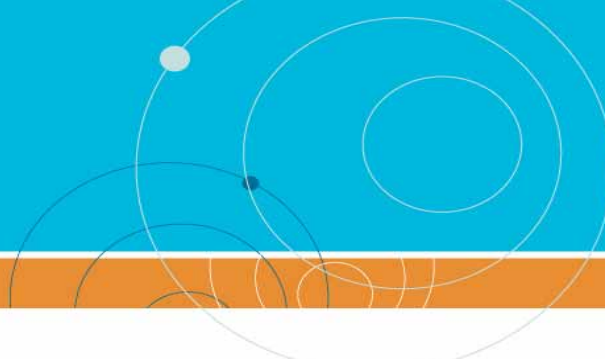




# more doctors

FOR OUTER METROPOLITAN AREAS



## RELOCATION INCENTIVE GRANT FOR DOCTORS MOVING TO OUTER METROPOLITAN AREAS

Between now and 31 December 2004, doctors in relatively well supplied inner metropolitan areas of the six State capital cities can apply for a relocation incentive grant if they wish to relocate to an outer metropolitan area where there is a shortage of doctors.

The grants are a component of the More Doctors for Outer Metropolitan Areas Measure announced in the 2002-03 Budget. The objective of the Measure is to improve the supply of doctors in outer metropolitan areas where there are doctor shortages.

### Who may apply?

The grant is available to both general practitioners and specialists. To be eligible, doctors are generally required to have an unrestricted Medicare provider number, have been practising in a relatively well supplied inner metropolitan area for at least one year and be willing to relocate to an outer metropolitan area where there is a shortage of doctors.

In addition to applying for an incentive grant, inner metropolitan doctors who are not vocationally recognised may be able to access higher Medicare rebates when they move from a relatively well supplied inner metropolitan area to an outer metropolitan area if they undertake a pathway to vocational recognition. This is available under the Outer Metropolitan Other Medical Practitioners Program.

### What is an eligible area?

Doctors may apply to relocate to an outer metropolitan area or an area of consideration, which is experiencing a shortage of doctors. Eligible areas are shown on the eligible area maps.

### What conditions apply to a relocation incentive grant being approved?

Incentives will only be paid to doctors who are moving away from inner metropolitan areas that are relatively well supplied with doctors. Medical workforce statistics will be taken into account when applications are assessed, to ensure that doctors are not paid incentives to move away from areas which are also experiencing workforce shortages. In general, doctors who have relocated prior to submitting a grant application will not be eligible for the grant.

### What incentives are being offered?

Doctors who relocate to an existing practice in an outer metropolitan area where there is a shortage of doctors will be eligible to receive up to \$20,000 provided they agree to continue to work in an approved location for a minimum period of two years.

Doctors who wish to establish a new practice in such an area will be eligible to receive up to \$30,000 provided they agree to continue to practise there for a minimum of three years.

Doctors can apply for the maximum grant in each case if they plan to work full time in the new outer metropolitan location. Partial grants are available on a pro rata basis for doctors who intend to work part time in an eligible location.

### **When will the grants be paid?**

The grants will be paid in three instalments:

- (a) 40% when the doctor signs an agreement with the Department;
- (b) 40% when the first Medicare rebate claims are lodged for services provided by the doctor in the new location; and
- (b) a further 20% 12 months after commencing practice at the new location.

### **Can more than one doctor apply for a grant to establish a group practice?**

Yes, provided it is a new practice and the doctors apply concurrently for a grant and each plans to work in the new practice. The amount of the grant to each doctor will depend on whether the doctor intends to practise in the outer metropolitan area on a full or part time basis.

### **What constitutes working on a full time or part time basis?**

Full-time grants are available to doctors who propose to work a full five-day week, or its equivalent. Partial grants are available on a pro-rata basis for those who want to work part time in an outer metropolitan area. Doctors may wish to split the time they work between an inner and an outer metropolitan area.

### **Is a doctor who is already working in an eligible outer metropolitan area or area of consideration eligible for a relocation grant?**

Such doctors may be eligible for a partial grant, if they are already working part time in an eligible area where there is an under supply of doctors and they propose to significantly increase the proportion of time they are working in that area.

### **How much time will doctors have to establish or join a practice as a condition of receiving a grant?**

To be eligible for a grant, doctors will generally be expected to commence practising in the new location within three months of signing the grant agreement with the Department.

### **What happens if a doctor changes the number of hours or sessions worked in the outer metropolitan area after the agreement is signed?**

An adjustment to the grant may be made. The amount of the adjustment would depend upon the extent of the change in hours.

### **What happens if a doctor does not continue to work in an outer metropolitan area or area of consideration for the period specified in the agreement with the Department?**

The doctor may be required to repay all or part of the grant, depending on how long the doctor had worked in the outer metropolitan area or area of consideration. If a doctor moves to another practice in an eligible outer metropolitan area, then repayment of the grant will not be required.

### **For more information on the Relocation Incentive Grant, contact the Department of Health and Ageing by:**

- calling the Department's Outer Metropolitan Hotline on 1800 727 899;
- emailing the Department's Outer Metropolitan Taskforce at [health.workforce@health.gov.au](mailto:health.workforce@health.gov.au) , or
- following the website links at: [www.health.gov.au/workforce](http://www.health.gov.au/workforce)