



# PROGRAM RULES

## Rural Pharmacy Liaison Officer Program

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**Australian Government**  
Department of Health

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## RURAL PHARMACY LIAISON OFFICER PROGRAM

### 1 INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the Program Rules governing the Rural Pharmacy Liaison Officer (RPLO) Program. This document must be read in conjunction with the *Pharmacy Programs Administrator General Terms and Conditions* (General Terms). Definitions in the General Terms apply in these Program Rules.

The Rural Pharmacy Liaison Officer Program is an initiative of the Rural Pharmacy Workforce Program (RPWP). The RPWP is designed to strengthen and support the rural pharmacy workforce, in order to provide increased access to quality pharmacy services for Patients residing in rural and remote regions of Australia.

RPLO is one of the Rural Support Programs funded under the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement to support targeted programs and services that improve access to Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicines and services for Patients living in rural and remote regions of Australia.

### 2 DEFINITIONS

**Pharmacy School** means a provider of pharmacy undergraduate or graduate entry courses leading to a registrable qualification as a Pharmacist.

**UDRH** means a University Department of Rural Health.

**RPLO** means Rural Pharmacy Liaison Officer.

**Liaison Officer** means a person employed by a university to promote rural pharmacy as a career choice and support rural Pharmacies and the rural pharmacy workforce as part of the RPLO Program.

### 3 BACKGROUND

The RPLO Program seeks to raise the profile of pharmacy within the University Departments of Rural Health (UDRH) and Pharmacy Schools, and to enable rural Pharmacists and pharmacy graduates to acquire the necessary skills to practise effectively in rural areas. Universities with UDRHs and Pharmacy Schools are eligible for participation in the RPLO Program.

### 4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The funding is being provided to implement local-level projects that will:

1. Provide support to both practising rural Community Pharmacies and to pharmacy students undertaking clinical placements in rural areas
2. Promote inter-professional collaboration with Pharmacies, Pharmacists, pharmacy students, and other universities
3. Strengthen mentoring and advisory arrangements for Pharmacies, Pharmacists and pharmacy students
4. Facilitate professional development and networking opportunities for Pharmacies, Pharmacists and pharmacy students.

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### 5 STRATEGIES

In order to meet the objective of the RPLO program, the successful service providers will need to employ a number of practicable and measurable strategies to meet the objectives of the program.

Potential strategies that could be put in place include, but that are not limited to:

1. Promote rural pharmacy as a career choice:
  - a. Engage with local students/pharmacy students/graduates about rural pharmacy workforce practise
  - b. Engage with pharmacy students/graduates to raise awareness of local issues and arrangements
  - c. Encourage Pharmacists to practise in rural and remote communities.
2. Identify local areas of need and facilitate local arrangements, in collaboration with other health professionals, to improve Patient health outcomes:
  - a. Build networks within rural pharmacy communities
  - b. Encourage/facilitate Pharmacist participation in meetings of other health professionals.
3. Support and maintain the rural pharmacy workforce:
  - a. Provide advisory and mentoring support to Pharmacists to enable them to become rural Pharmacy Preceptors and support ongoing development
  - b. Support rural communities and Pharmacies and provide information regarding rural services and programs including the Seventh Agreement programs
  - c. Support rural Pharmacists to access education opportunities
  - d. Encourage meaningful working opportunities through facilitation of a variety of work opportunities within the community (e.g. S100 arrangements, hospital, residential Aged Care Facilities)
  - e. Ensure effective pathways exist to attract the next generation of pharmacy graduates to work in a rural and remote Pharmacy practice
  - f. Engage students in learning and discussion about the environment in which rural Pharmacists operate (e.g. through career seminars).
4. Promote and support local links between pharmacy and other health professionals:
  - a. Encourage formation of a "health professional network" in area to discuss local health issues or linking in where one already exists
  - b. Build the linkages required to increase the number of clinical placements available in rural and remote Pharmacy practice
  - c. Consider building alliances with other community and government workforce programs.
5. Provide local support structures for pharmacy students undertaking clinical placements:
  - a. Build linkages with local Pharmacy Schools and placement programs
  - b. Establish relationships with local Pharmacies providing clinical placements
  - c. Facilitate inter-professional placement opportunities
  - d. Facilitate development of sustainable student networks to provide ongoing support for the graduates including their desire to learn and obtain new skills

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- e. Assist graduates to integrate into a rural Pharmacy setting
- f. Provide mentoring to pharmacy students in order to support their learning experience in rural areas
- g. Develop locally tailored programs and methods that are specific to a rural Pharmacy and help to facilitate professional education and workplace training for all graduates.

## 6 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Universities participating in the Program will be contracted by the Pharmacy Programs Administrator to deliver the RPLO Program. Universities are required to report on a six-monthly basis. Copies of Reports may be provided to the Department of Health.

Reporting requirements will be detailed in the contract and will include:

- An annual Project Plan, including a communications and promotions timetable
- Progress Reports (details to be included in contract)
- Statement of Income and Expenditure to be provided in a format acceptable to the Pharmacy Programs Administrator
- Audited Financial Statements to cover the most recent financial year
- A Final Report (to be provided when participation in the Program has ceased).

In addition, the universities will be required to submit a position description for each Liaison Officer engaged under the Program at the beginning of their contract period that is consistent with the activities included in their submission.

## 7 PAYMENTS

Payments will be made to the participating universities based on the payment schedule outlined in their contract.

Payments will only be made on receipt of satisfactory reporting requirements and deliverables.

Should a position to undertake the services only be filled for a part of a period as specified in the payment schedule of the contract, then payment will be calculated on a pro-rata basis. Payment may be suspended should the position undertaking the services become vacant for a period exceeding one month.

The Pharmacy Programs Administrator reserves the right to withhold payment or terminate the contract with a university if contractual obligations are not met.

## 8 IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The Pharmacy Programs Administrator may provide the Department of Health with information about the Program, the use of funds under this Program and on any issues that may arise in relation to a particular circumstance.

Any publications or promotional items that arise from participating in this Program are required to include the following acknowledgement "This Program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health as part of the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement".

## 9 AUDIT AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

Service Providers must retain full and true records (including all patient consent forms) in relation to the provision of services for not less than seven years after the claim for payment. Such records must be kept in a manner that permits them to be conveniently and properly audited, and enables the amounts claimed as well as the services provided under the General Terms and these Program Rules to be determined. Service Providers may be subject to audits by the Australian Government Department of Health (or its representative) to ensure that the General Terms and these Program Rules have been complied with, and must provide all and any records requested as part of such audit(s).

Service Providers must also ensure that they are using current documents when obtaining information or consent from patients. Service Providers that wrongfully or incorrectly receive support and/or do not meet the requirements set out in the General Terms and these Program Rules may be subject to compliance action (as determined by the Australian Government Department of Health or Pharmacy Programs Administrator) and repayment may be required. Under section 137.1 of the Criminal Code, giving false and misleading information is a serious offence. If an audit/compliance action is to be conducted, Service Providers will be required to produce documentation within a specified time frame.

## 10 RESOURCES

RPLO Program resources are available for download at [www.ppaonline.com.au](http://www.ppaonline.com.au).



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