



# PROGRAM RULES

## Rural Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance

July 2019



**Australian Government**  
Department of Health

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## RURAL PHARMACY MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

### 1 INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the Program Rules governing the Rural Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance (RPMA) Program. This document must be read in conjunction with the *Pharmacy Programs Administrator's General Terms and Conditions* (General Terms). Definitions in the General Terms apply in these Program Rules.

RPMA supports improved access to Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicines and pharmacy services for Patients in rural and remote regions of Australia, through the provision of a support Allowance that recognises the additional financial burden of maintaining a Pharmacy in these areas.

RPMA is part of the suite of Rural Support Programs funded under the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement (6CPA) to support targeted programs and services that improve access to PBS medicines and services for Patients living in rural and remote regions of Australia.

### 2 BACKGROUND

The RPMA was introduced under the Third Community Pharmacy Agreement in recognition of the additional financial burden of maintaining a Pharmacy in rural or remote areas of Australia. The monthly Allowance is paid to eligible proprietors of Pharmacies approved under Section 90 of the *National Health Act 1953*.

The Allowance is calculated annually, based on the remoteness of the Pharmacy according to the Pharmacy Accessibility Remoteness Index of Australia (PhARIA), and the level of PBS and Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS) prescription volumes. Pharmacies with low prescription volumes in more remote areas receive the highest level of the Allowance.

### 3 PARTICIPATION

#### 3.1 Community Pharmacy Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in the RPMA Program a Pharmacy must have:

- a. A Section 90 Pharmacy approval
- b. A prescription volume under the upper limit of the RPMA Payment Matrix. The latest version of the RPMA Payment Matrix can be found at [www.ppaonline.com.au](http://www.ppaonline.com.au)
- c. Opening hours, with a Registered Pharmacist in attendance for a minimum of:
  - 20 hours per week
  - 4 days each week
  - 48 weeks of each allowance year.

The Pharmacy must be located in one of the following PhARIA categories to be deemed eligible:

- PhARIA 2 – Accessible group 1
- PhARIA 3 – Accessible group 2
- PhARIA 4 – Moderately accessible
- PhARIA 5 – Remote
- PhARIA 6 – Very Remote

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The PhARIA is effective for the Allowance year and any changes to the PhARIA categories will be included in the annual revision of the Allowance.

Failure to maintain compliance with any or all of the above Eligibility Criteria may result in the Eligible Community Pharmacy being ineligible to participate in the RPMA Program.

### 3.2 Community Pharmacy Obligations

An Eligible Community Pharmacy must notify the Pharmacy Programs Administrator immediately when it becomes aware of any circumstance, event or fact that may affect eligibility to participate in the RPMA Program.

Eligible Community Pharmacies must notify the Pharmacy Programs Administrator within 14 days if their Section 90 number changes or becomes inactive, or their opening hours are to be reduced below the minimum hours stated in clause 2 of these Guidelines.

If the Pharmacy Programs Administrator is not notified of these changes within 14 days then the following may apply:

- a. Ongoing monthly payments may be suspended or cancelled; or
- b. Payments made since the reduction in opening hours may be recovered.

## 4 APPLYING FOR THE RPMA

Eligible Community Pharmacy Registration is available via the Pharmacy Programs Administrator [Portal](#).

An Eligible Community Pharmacy will not be registered until the Eligible Community Pharmacy receives an email notification from the Portal confirming the registration has been accepted.

### 4.1 Applying for the First Time

An Eligible Community Pharmacy applying for the RPMA for the first time is required to complete a new application via the Pharmacy Programs Administrator [Portal](#).

Eligible Community Pharmacies will receive confirmation of accepted applications via the email address provided during the registration process on the Portal.

Eligible Community Pharmacies only need to apply for the RPMA once. Each financial year afterwards, the Community Pharmacies receiving the RPMA are required to submit a renewal that includes a re-certification of their eligibility. RPMA payment schedules are based on information in the application and renewal.

### 4.2 Annual Renewal

To continue receiving payments under the RPMA Program, a Community Pharmacy must submit an annual renewal that includes re-certification of eligibility. The renewal must be submitted via the Pharmacy Programs Administrator [Portal](#) by 14 June for the Allowance Year beginning the following 1 July.

If the RPMA Certification Statement is not submitted within the required timeframe then RPMA payments may be delayed or ceased.

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### 5 PAYMENTS

The RPMA is calculated each year from 1 July and paid monthly to Eligible Community Pharmacies, based on the RPMA Payment Matrix for that financial year. The current RPMA Payment Matrix is available at [www.ppaonline.com.au](http://www.ppaonline.com.au) and in Appendix A of this document.

Payments will be made into the bank account nominated during the registration process via the Portal.

To receive payments under the RPMA Program, the Eligible Community Pharmacy must:

- Meet the Community Pharmacy Eligibility Criteria detailed in clause 3; and
- Provide an RPMA Application or Certification Statement as detailed in clause 4, confirming that the Eligibility Criteria detailed in clause 3 has been met including:
  - The minimum agreed trading hours with a Registered Pharmacist in attendance were met
  - The Pharmacy will continue to meet the minimum agreed trading hours with a Registered Pharmacist in attendance for the next 12 months.

Payment records and remittance advices for each approved payment will be provided via the Portal.

If an Eligible Community Pharmacy fails to comply with the General Terms and/or these Program Rules, clause 5 of the General Terms will apply and the Pharmacy Programs Administrator and the Australian Government may at its discretion pursue debt recovery or reduce or withhold any future payments to that Eligible Community Pharmacy.

If the Pharmacy Programs Administrator seeks further information, clarification or substantiation, the Eligible Community Pharmacy agrees to respond within the time frame nominated by the Pharmacy Programs Administrator.

If the information provided by the Eligible Community Pharmacy does not satisfy the Pharmacy Programs Administrator they are not obliged to make a payment.

### 6 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

If a Pharmacy does not meet one or more of the Community Pharmacy Eligibility Criteria detailed in clause 3, the Pharmacy owner may write to the Pharmacy Programs Administrator for an assessment of eligibility under exceptional circumstances. The assessment of the application will be jointly undertaken between the Pharmacy Programs Administrator and the Australian Government Department of Health and will be based on how appropriate the services are for the community.

Pharmacies that are approved under exceptional circumstances will receive a percentage of the 'standard' payment for the appropriate PhARIA category, determined by the agreed terms of the exceptional circumstance (for example: reduced opening hours).

An RPMA Application or Annual Renewal rejection due to a change in an Eligible Community Pharmacy's circumstances such as a script volume or PhARIA category is not considered an exceptional circumstance.

Any request for consideration as an exceptional circumstance must be made in writing to the following address and contain sufficient justification to support the request:

The PPA Support Centre  
Locked Bag 3

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Collins Street East  
Victoria 8003

Or via email to: [help@ppaonline.com.au](mailto:help@ppaonline.com.au)

### 7 RESOURCES

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

Not in Use

**RURAL PHARMACY MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE**
**APPENDIX A RPMA PAYMENT MATRIX 2019-20**
**PhARIA Category**

Prescription volume ranges	2 Accessible (group 1)	3 Accessible (group 2)	4 Moderately accessible	5 Remote	6 Very remote
0 - 18973	\$12,029	\$15,036	\$22,964	\$34,447	\$45,930
18974 - 37947	\$10,935	\$13,669	\$20,777	\$31,166	\$41,555
37948 - 47433	\$9,842	\$12,302	\$18,590	\$27,885	\$37,180
47434 - 56920	\$8,748	\$10,935	\$16,403	\$24,605	\$32,806
56921 - 66407	\$7,655	\$9,568	\$14,216	\$21,324	\$28,432
66408 - 75894	\$6,561	\$8,202	\$12,029	\$18,043	\$24,058
75895 - 85380	\$5,468	\$6,835	\$9,842	\$14,763	\$19,684
<b>Median \$37,947</b>					

Not for use


**CONTACT THE SUPPORT CENTRE:** 1800 951 285 | [support@ppaonline.com.au](mailto:support@ppaonline.com.au)