

RADIATION ONCOLOGY HEALTH PROGRAM GRANTS (ROHPG) REVIEW 2020 – TERMS OF REFERENCE

The ROHPG scheme

The Radiation Oncology Health Program Grants (ROHPG) scheme provides a contribution towards the capital cost of eligible radiation therapy equipment. Payments are in addition to Medicare rebates that patients receive for radiotherapy services.

Recognising the importance of radiation oncology services for the health outcomes of cancer patients, the objectives of the ROHPG scheme are to assist in:

- improving health outcomes for cancer patients;
- ensuring adequate and equitable access to radiation oncology services for Australian cancer patients;
- improving equity of access for cancer patients; and
- maintaining the quality and safety of radiation oncology equipment.

The ROHPG scheme is established and administered under Part IV of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* (the Act) and is open to public and private radiation oncology providers.

The current administrative guidelines for the ROHPG scheme, including the application process and assessment criteria, are at the following link:

[https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/79D864C3A344CF12CA257BF0001D3AA6/\\$File/ROHPG-Guidelines-1-January-2020.pdf](https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/79D864C3A344CF12CA257BF0001D3AA6/$File/ROHPG-Guidelines-1-January-2020.pdf) .

Context

A review of the ROHPG scheme was undertaken in 2016 by an external evaluator. That review led to a number of administrative changes to the program. In 2017-18 further changes were made to funding rates for private providers of radiation oncology services under the ROHPG for a period of four years until 30 June 2021. The Government has agreed to a follow-up review of the program in 2020-21, including an assessment of the impact of these changes.

Terms of Reference

The purpose of this review is to assess the effectiveness of the ROHPG scheme against the objectives of the program, including the impact of revised arrangements introduced in 2017-18. The review of the ROHPG must address the following terms of reference:

A: The ongoing need and appropriateness of the ROHPG scheme:

- a) Are the objectives of the scheme still relevant?
- b) Is a capital grants scheme the most appropriate way to facilitate access, quality and safety of radiation oncology services in Australia?
- c) How does the program intersect with other Commonwealth/State funding arrangements?

B: The effectiveness of the scheme in meeting the program's objectives

- a) Is the ROHPG ensuring adequate, equitable access to radiation oncology services across Australia?

- I. Are there geographic or other service gaps that are not being met by the program?
 - II. Has the program led to any over-servicing of radiation oncology services?
 - III. Is the current approach for identifying geographic areas of need accurate and transparent and does it enable appropriate targeting of funding to facilitate access to radiotherapy services?
 - IV. Is there evidence to support different funding rates for public and private providers for linacs beyond the intended expiry date of 30 June 2021?
- b) Is the ROHPG ensuring quality and safety of radiation oncology equipment?
- I. Is the program achieving timely and appropriate replacement of equipment? How should this be measured?
 - II. Are their sufficient safeguards in place to provide assurance that adequate safety and quality standards are being met in relation to ROHPG funded equipment?

C: The efficient and effective administration of the ROHPG scheme

- a) Are the administrative arrangements introduced in 2017-18 effective, including:
- I. Paying a set capital contribution for high cost equipment
 - II. Making capital payments on an annual basis over a 10 year period
 - III. Removing the link for capital reimbursement to MBS service volume
 - IV. Priority Area identified annually by States and Territories and published on Health website
 - V. Two-stream application process – applications for new health services to be invited for Priority Areas annually; ongoing assessment of other applications
 - VI. New facilities must become operational within 2 years of approval
 - VII. Publication of ROHPG funded facilities on Health website
 - VIII. Requirement for appropriate dosimetry audits of funded facilities.

D: Is there appropriate accountability for ROHPG Scheme grant funds?

- I. Are program administration arrangements effective in ensuring appropriate safeguards, accountability and transparency of decision-making of grant funds? This should include consideration of:
 - a. Assessment of applications, including competing applications for new priority areas;
 - b. Payment processes; and
 - c. Record keeping and auditing procedures.
- III. Do the conditions of funding (specified in the funding instrument) promote the objectives of the ROHPG scheme and provide assurance of probity?
- IV. What performance indicators should be used to assess the scheme against its objectives?