HHF Regional Priority Round – Additional Guidance

The HHF Regional Priority Round will improve access to essential health services to as many Australians as possible living in rural, regional and remote areas through investments in health infrastructure. This will help close the gap in health outcomes between major metropolitan and regional areas of Australia.

Projects should focus on upgrades to regional health infrastructure, expansions to regional hospitals, and to supporting the clinical training capacity of regional hospitals. Preference will be given to projects that align with the Government's health reform agenda in the following areas:

- improved acute care facilities and equipment;

- primary and community health service infrastructure - focusing on facilities or equipment to support a more integrated approach, particularly in the areas of chronic disease, mental health and dental health;

- workforce training infrastructure - to support approaches to improve the health and medical workforce, to deal with the increase in numbers of people training to be health professionals, and to assist in improving distribution;

- e-Health – projects that will expand the use of e-Health to increase connectedness between providers and patients;

- specialised cancer care - development of integrated cancer care facilities; and

- research facilities that are integrated with improving clinical care and/or health workforce training.

Hospitals, primary and community care facilities (including multi-purpose services), health research institutes and universities may apply for funding in this context.

In submitting an application to the HHF Regional Priority round, <u>in addition to addressing the HHF Evaluation Criteria</u>, applicants will need to demonstrate how the proposed project meets the following:

A. Address the health needs of regional, rural and remote areas of Australia;

B. Provide or link to other health services to provide comprehensive multi-disciplinary care; and

C. Provide equitable and affordable access.

The following explanatory statements in relation to the above are intended as a guide for potential applicants.

<u>A. Address the health needs of regional, rural and remote areas of Australia</u>

The primary focus of the HHF Regional Priority Round is on health infrastructure projects in regional communities in the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) Remoteness Areas (RA) 2 to 5.

Applications may also be considered for projects in non-capital city RA1 areas which can demonstrate that they will exclusively or predominantly service the health needs of regional patients and offer the most sustainable and effective solution for this purpose.

Applications may, in exceptional circumstances, also be considered in state capital city RA1 areas, provided they can clearly demonstrate that they will exclusively or predominantly service the health needs of regional patients and offer the most sustainable and effective solution for this purpose.

B. Provide or link to other health services to provide comprehensive multi-disciplinary care

Projects should help to optimise the access of patients in regional areas to essential health services and address current access gaps.

Priority will be given to projects that will assist in providing comprehensive, multi-disciplinary, integrated care locally to patients. Projects that will help strengthen linkages and the coordination of care between the acute and primary health care settings are of particular interest.

Where appropriate, applicants should also demonstrate how the project will link with services provided in larger population centres, such as specialised treatment and/or expensive equipment. Projects that facilitate the use of e-Health are of particular interest.

Applicants must demonstrate how the proposed project will help achieve state or territory health priorities and, where applicable, how the project aligns with jurisdictional health planning.

Applicants may wish to indicate levels of support or endorsement from state or territory governments or departments.

Applicants must demonstrate that they have local support for the application and how they will foster local engagement should they be successful.

C. Provide equitable and affordable access

A proposed project will provide equitable access to, and affordable services for, patients in rural, regional and remote Australia, and must consider the needs of Indigenous Australians and people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

When people need treatment away from home, appropriate patient travel support and accommodation facilities become vital. Projects will be well sited to minimise avoidable travel, accommodation and related expenses for patients and their carers. This will help to ensure that people can access the right care at the right time, as close as possible to home and family, irrespective of where they live or their social circumstances.

The business case must demonstrate how equitable and feasible access (including evidence of direct transport links) to the project will be provided.

The business case must also demonstrate how the project will provide affordable services for patients that are sustainable over time.