



**THE HON WARREN SNOWDON MP**  
**Minister for Indigenous Health, Rural and Regional Health**  
**and Regional Services Delivery**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Health Infrastructure Funding for Remote Communities**

Australia's rural and remote health service providers are now able to access funding for essential health infrastructure and equipment in a new grant round.

The round is the fourth under the \$46 million National Rural and Remote Health Infrastructure Program (NRRHIP). Applications opened on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November and close on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2010.

The NRRHIP grants can be used to build new and improve existing facilities as well as for the purchase of medical equipment. Proposals that increase training facilities in practices are also eligible.

The Minister for Indigenous Health, Rural and Regional Health and Regional Services Delivery, Warren Snowdon, said the NRRHIP was a competitive grant program with the aim of providing health infrastructure and equipment to improve health care in rural and remote areas.

"It will also assist strategic planning in small rural private hospitals," Mr Snowdon said.

To be eligible, each application must be for no more than \$500,000 and be located in communities with a population no greater than 20,000. There is no requirement for matching funds.

Private medical practitioners can apply for funds for training facilities for medical students or registrars. Divisions of General Practice and local government organisations can seek money for establishing medical and health facilities on public hospital or health campus grounds.

Mr Snowdon said the first three NRRHIP rounds had funded 137 projects, totalling \$27.9 million.

Further information on how to apply is available online from the Department of Health and Ageing website from today at <http://www.health.gov.au/nrrhip>

**Optometrists needed in remote Indigenous communities**

Optometrists are being sought to improve eye health care in remote and very remote Indigenous communities.

Mr Snowdon said that a call for expressions of interest had been made for optometrists willing to provide outreach services in priority Indigenous communities.

“Attracting optometrists to deliver services in these communities will improve access to optometric services in the places that need it the most – more visits, more services, more locations,” Mr Snowdon said.

Mr Snowdon said the Government was providing additional funding of \$6.5 million over four years to expand the Visiting Optometrists Scheme (VOS).

This will better target primary eye health care to Indigenous Australians in remote and very remote communities,” he said.

Expressions of interest close on 27 November 2009 and the expanded services are expected to begin early in 2010.

Further information about the VOS expression of interest is available online from the Department of Health and Ageing website: <http://www.health.gov.au/vos> .

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