



**SUPPORT FOR RURAL
SPECIALISTS IN
AUSTRALIA**

Funding Round 8

Application Guidelines

Completed applications must be submitted by:

11.59pm AEST, 15 April 2024

To be fair to all applicants, late applications will not be accepted.



SRSA is funded by the Australian Department of Health and Aged Care and managed by the Council of Presidents of Medical Colleges

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1. The SRSA Program

1.1 Overview

Support for Rural Specialists in Australia (SRSA) is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care and managed by the Council of Presidents of Medical Colleges (CPMC).

The SRSA program aims to help rural communities receive a high standard of care from skilled, supported and engaged medical specialists.

Further information can be found at www.ruralspecialist.org.au.

1.2 Governance

The CPMC manages the SRSA program with the assistance of the SRSA Subcommittee. The SRSA Subcommittee is made up of rural medical specialists as well as representatives from specialist medical colleges and the Department of Health. It provides oversight and expert advice over the life of the program.

Day-to-day operations of program are carried out by the SRSA Program Management Unit (PMU), which is housed by the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. The contact details for the PMU are:

Email: admin@ruralspecialist.org.au

Phone: 02 9256 5496

2. Individual CPD Support Grants

2.1 Purpose

SRSA individual grants aim to help rural specialists access high quality CPD and networking that suits their individual needs.

SRSA grants are available to **medical specialists who live and work in regional, rural, and remote** Australia. **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander trainees** undertaking training with an Australian/Australasian specialist medical college are also eligible to apply.

General practitioners are **not** eligible for the program, as alternative sources of funding are available for general practitioners.

All applicants must meet the additional eligibility requirements set out in Section 2.3.

2.2 Application Requirements

2.2.1 Applications must be submitted electronically via the [SRSA Application Portal](#) or via email to admin@ruralspecialist.org.au.

2.2.2 Applications must be completed in conjunction with reading the Application Guidelines.

- 2.2.3** Applicants and applications must address and meet the criteria set out in sections 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 below.
- 2.2.4** Applicants can apply for one (1) CPD activity per person, per funding round.
- Applicants can apply for up to \$12,000.
 - Requests for multiple activities will not be considered.
- 2.2.5** Applicants must ensure all questions are answered accurately and completely and keep a copy of the application for their own records.
- 2.2.6** Applications must be submitted by **11.59pm AEST, 15 April 2024**.

2.3 Applicant Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for a grant, applicants must:

- 2.3.1 Hold a specialist title** as part of their Ahpra registration (excluding the title of “specialist general practitioner”). The list of specialist titles can be found in the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) document “Specialties, Fields of Specialty Practice and Related Specialist Titles”:

<https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Registration/Types/Specialist-Registration/Medical-Specialties-and-Specialty-Fields>

- **International medical graduates** (IMGs) who are undertaking medical college requirements for specialist recognition via the Australian Medical Council (AMC) Specialist Assessment Pathway are eligible to apply.
- **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander trainees** of the following Australian/Australasian specialist medical colleges are also eligible to apply:
 - Australasian College of Dermatologists
 - Australasian College of Emergency Medicine
 - Australasian College of Sport and Exercise Physicians
 - Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists
 - College of Intensive Care Medicine of Australia and New Zealand
 - Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators
 - Royal Australasian College of Physicians
 - Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
 - Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia
 - Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
 - Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists
 - Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
 - Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists
- **Specialist general practitioners are not eligible to apply unless they hold an additional specialist title** (e.g., a dual specialist in general practice and medical administration).

2.3.2 Live and work in regional, rural or remote areas defined as [Modified Monash Model](#) 2019 categories MM2 to MM7. Information on the Monash 2019 classification of any address in Australia can be found on the Health Workforce Locator: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/health-workforce-locator/health-workforce-locator>

- Fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) applicants are eligible to apply but will be considered the lowest priority by the assessment panel.

2.3.3 Hold current practice qualifications and registrations including compliance with any state and territory requirements and the MBA. IMGs undertaking medical college requirements for specialist recognition via the AMC Specialist Assessment Pathway are eligible to apply, as per 2.3.1.

2.3.4 Have been living and working in a regional, rural, or remote area for no less than **12 months**, inclusive of parental leave.

2.4 CPD Activity Eligibility Criteria

2.4.1 The CPD activity must be completed within the 6-month time frame specified in the application form (for Funding Round 8: **1 July 2024 to 31 December 2024**).

2.4.2 In-person CPD activities must be undertaken in Australia or New Zealand.

2.4.3 Online-only activities are eligible but will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2.4.4 The activity **provider** must be accredited or otherwise recognised. Training providers may include, but are not confined to, universities, registered training organisations and professional bodies such as medical colleges and associations.

2.4.5 If the CPD activity is a **clinical attachment, peer review or similar**, it must meet individual specialist medical college CPD program frameworks. This form of CPD is highly encouraged.

2.4.6 University level courses (or “units of study”) may be considered; however, they must be completed within the 6-month activity window outlined in 2.4.1.

2.4.7 The CPD activity must be directly relevant to the applicant’s **current work** in a regional, rural, or remote area of Australia.

2.4.8 The CPD activity must align with the applicant’s **learning needs**. The application must clearly document the learning outcomes and implications for practice and outline a clear process for monitoring the achievement of learning objectives.

2.4.9 Applicants must be able to justify the CPD activity's **benefit for the rural community/ies** they serve.

2.5 Application Selection Criteria

2.5.1 Demonstration of relevance of the CPD activity to identified healthcare needs of the community/ies the applicant serves.

2.5.2 Demonstration of relevance of the CPD activity to the applicant's individual educational needs and ability to reduce professional isolation.

2.5.3 Demonstration of appropriate educational principles in the application to enable key knowledge/skills attainment and transfer.

2.5.4 Ability for the CPD activity contribute to sustainable changes in practice.

2.5.5 Rurality of an applicant's main practice (regional, rural, and remote focus).

2.5.6 The type of CPD activity and its relative cost effectiveness/value.

2.5.7 The length of time the applicant has worked in a rural, remote, or regional location(s), inclusive of any period(s) of parental leave.

3. Budget and Expense Guidelines

3.1 Budget Guidelines

- 3.1.1 Applications will be accepted up to a value of **\$12,000** per activity, per person.
- 3.1.2 Applicants may apply for 1 (one) CPD activity per person, per funding round.
- 3.1.3 Grant funds cannot be split between **multiple activities** unless they are directly related (e.g., a workshop held in conjunction with a conference).

3.2 Expense Guidelines

- 3.2.1 Only **economy class air travel** is permitted with use of SRSA funds.
- 3.2.2 Overnight **accommodation** is permitted only where travelling times make it impractical to travel on the morning of the event or to return on the same day following the event. Where overnight accommodation is required, a maximum of \$375 per night is permitted.
- 3.2.3 Taxis/ridesharing services (e.g. Uber), airport transfers, parking, rental vehicles, and/or other **transport costs** between the location of an applicant's home/airport/accommodation and a CPD activity are permitted.
- 3.2.4 **Private car travel** between these locations is also permitted and must be allocated at a rate of 0.85c per km. If a private car is used in place of air travel, the total expenditure cannot exceed the respective flight cost.
- 3.2.5 The daily rate for meal allowances under grant allocation and spending is \$170 AUD per day.
- 3.2.6 Grant funds do not cover costs associated with **accompanying persons**, nor **additional travel** unrelated to the approved activity (e.g., travel for a holiday following an approved conference).
- 3.2.7 Grant funds cannot be used for any expenses other than those associated with the approved activity.

4. Application Assessment

4.1 Ranking

Eligible grant applications are initially ranked according to the following criteria:

- Rural/remoteness rating of current residential and practice address (as outlined in Section 2.3.2);
- Time (months) living and working in rural/remote locations, inclusive of any period(s) of parental leave;
- Type of CPD activity requested (as outlined in Section 2.4)

4.2 Review

- 4.2.1 An assessment panel consisting of members of the SRSA Subcommittee will assess ranked grant applications according to the selection criteria outlined under Section 2.5.
- 4.2.2 The assessment panel prioritises participatory activities such as clinical attachments, mentorships, peer review, and workshops/courses over less participatory activities such as conferences and meetings.
- 4.2.3 Each Funding Round is allocated a fixed amount of funds.
- 4.2.4 The assessment panel may partially fund lower ranked grant applications.
- 4.2.5 Applicants will receive a decision outcome via e-mail **by 15 May 2024**.

5. Compliance

5.1 Payment and Use of Funds

- 5.1.1 Successful applicants will be offered terms and conditions to accept their SRSA grant and must nominate an individual bank account to which funds will be transferred.
- 5.1.2 Funds must be used in accordance with the approved grant application and in line with expense guidelines, as per 3.2.

5.2 Reporting Requirements

- 5.2.1 Following completion of their CPD activity, grant recipients must submit evidence of activity completion (e.g., certificate of attendance) and a signed financial declaration. These documents must be submitted within one month of the activity's end date.
- 5.2.2 The SRSA PMU will contact grant recipients prior to reporting deadlines a copy of the financial declaration form.
- 5.2.3 CPMC reserves the right to reclaim grant funds if reporting is not provided.
- 5.2.4 Any grant recipient who does not submit proper evidence (evidence of completion and signed financial declaration) will be ineligible for future grants.
- 5.2.5 Grant recipients who fail to comply with these requirements will be reported by CPMC to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra).

5.3 Changes to Approved CPD Activity

- 5.3.1 The PMU, in consultation with the SRSA Subcommittee, may approve a change to the originally approved CPD activity, where:
 - a) the grant recipient is unable to attend the approved CPD activity due to external circumstances or significant personal and/or work commitments;

- b) the grant recipient is unable to secure registration for the CPD activity due to attendee numbers; or
- c) the provider has cancelled the event.

5.3.2 Any alternative CPD activity must meet the criteria outlined in Section 2.4.

5.3.3 Grant recipients unable to attend their activity as planned must contact the SRSA PMU promptly to discuss alternate proposals and submit an updated budget. If a satisfactory alternate cannot be found, grant funds must be returned to CPMC.

6. Further Information

6.1 Reconsideration of the Decision

6.1.1 Grant applicants may request a reconsideration of a funding decision.

6.1.2 Reconsideration of the decision is conducted by the assessment panel which made the original decision.

6.1.3 The request for reconsideration of the decision must:

- a) be made in writing to the contact details provided in Section 1.2; and
- b) be received within 28 days of the applicant being advised of the decision.

6.1.4 The assessment panel must give the applicant written notice of its decision on the request for reconsideration of the decision within a reasonable timeframe.

6.2 Grant Transfer

Grant recipients are not permitted to transfer awarded CPD grants to their colleagues or other rural medical specialists.

6.3 Privacy

Any information provided to the SRSA program by an applicant will be dealt with in accordance with *Privacy Act 1988*.

6.4 Feedback and Complaints

Grant applicants and recipients can provide feedback and complaints to the SRSA PMU via the contact details outlined in Section 1.2.