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## Promoting primary health teams through expansion of Regional Medical Infrastructure Fund (RMIF) eligibility

The Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP) CEO Kate Carnell today has called on Warren Truss MP, Minister for Transport and Regional Services to make changes to eligibility criteria to enhance the up take of the existing Regional Medical Infrastructure Fund (RMIF) program.

“We know that primary health care delivered through multidisciplinary teams results in better health outcomes. We also know that there are a number of hurdles to attracting health workforce to the bush. We need all the incentives we can get to support viable primary health care teams in rural and remote Australia.

“Divisions of General Practice engage GP practices everyday. They are well placed to work with interested practices to access the RMIF and other funds to deliver creative health care solutions and the best possible care.

“Many GPs have asked ADGP to work with the government to change the eligibility for the Fund to include Divisions as a matter of priority”.

ADGP’s 2006-07 Federal Budget Submission called for incentives for practice amalgamation, co-location and expansion.

“We see a vital need to support practices that wish to expand or undertake renovation or extensions to create a suitable clinical area to accommodate a nurse and/or other members of the practice team. This will enhance the ability of many practices who do not currently employ a nurse or affiliations with allied health providers, to be able to provide this service to their community” Ms Carnell said.

“Divisions are solution-focused organisations and work with the regional community all the time. There is a solid case for Divisions to be given immediate eligibility to access the Regional Medical Infrastructure Fund.”

Allowing the Divisions access to the RMIF would open up a new range of options for these communities including enhancing the viability for practice nurses and other allied health professionals to be based with GPs in these country towns when proposals are developed.

“The RMIF is a great program with lots of potential. What is missing is the Divisions of General Practice - the vital local link in ensuring the program reaches its full potential.

“ADGP, as the national peak body for the network, is well placed to support our members to participate in the initiative to deliver to their communities.

### WHAT IS ADGP?

- ADGP is the peak body representing 119 Divisions of General Practice and eight State-based organisations (SBOs) around Australia. The Divisions Network supports general practice and their practice teams and drives the implementation of innovative health strategies.
- ADGP, through the Divisions Network, works to integrate general practice with other sectors of the health system, both government and non-government, to deliver high quality care to the Australian community.
- ADGP is committed to promoting the health of all Australians by supporting the role of Divisions in the nation’s primary health care system.



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The ADGP network is the key infrastructure in Australia linking Australia's GPs and other health professionals to provide integrated, quality primary health care services delivered through general practice. Divisions are community-based organisations that work with local health services to provide a gateway to a host of primary care services and providers. Effective use of the network, within a broader national primary health care framework can assist in addressing many of the problems in the current health system, particularly those for rural and remote communities.

The Rural Medical Infrastructure Fund is a three year initiative which commenced in 2005 to provide funding to small rural councils to help establish 'walk-in walk out' community medical facilities, with the aim of making it easier to recruit or retain general practitioners.

The RMIF can contribute up to \$200,000 to the cost incurred by local councils that purchase and fit-out facilities, providing continuity of practice management regardless of doctor turnover.

A copy of ADGP's 2006-07 Federal Budget Submission can be found at  
[http://www.adgp.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=329&PageMode=indiv&page\\_id=6608](http://www.adgp.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=329&PageMode=indiv&page_id=6608)

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