



THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP
Minister for Health and Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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FIRST MEDICARE LOCALS TO CONTINUE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE REFORM

Nineteen communities around Australia will lead primary health care reform as Minister for Health and Ageing Nicola Roxon announced the organisations that will become the nation's first Medicare Locals from 1 July 2011.

"Throughout all our reform consultation, different patients spoke of their confusion and difficulty finding their way through Australia's complex health system," Minister Roxon said.

"Many people would praise their local GP, or allied health worker, but would also say how difficult it was finding the right service at the right time.

"Helping Australians to overcome these difficulties and access the health services they need, closer to home was one of the Government's main motivations for pursuing primary health care reform.

"GPs will, of course, always be at the centre of primary health care in Australia.

"But the new Medicare Locals will have the important role of working with GPs, nurses, allied health professionals, Indigenous health organisations and Local Hospital Networks to identify and respond to gaps in local health services – and help patients and professionals navigate our complex system more easily.

"There will be no one-size-fits-all for Medicare Locals. These locally-run organisations will help to better connect the vast array of primary health care services and also to improve local services.

"Patients will benefit from primary health care services that are better targeted to meet their local needs, and that work closely with other services, such as local hospitals.

"In particular, Medicare Locals will play a key role in helping to improve access to after-hours care, chronic disease prevention and management programs and mental health initiatives."

The Gillard Government received many high quality applications to become Medicare Locals. With this breadth of quality applications, the Government has identified 19 organisations across urban and rural Australia to be the first tranche of Medicare Locals.

All applications have been chosen from high performing Divisions of General Practice, many working in consortia with other organisations, with established records in improving primary health care for their local community, and strong plans to improve local primary care services into the future.

15 are being announced today, the 4 in Victoria will be announced within the next week following a request from Victoria to have more time to consider the Victorian Medicare Local boundaries.

Minister Roxon announced today the final boundaries and catchments for all Medicare Locals, other than those in Victoria, following a reassessment to ensure local responsiveness. The revised boundaries include additional Medicare Locals in New South Wales and Western Australia. These boundaries are now available on www.yourhealth.gov.au

For all media inquiries, please contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 7220

A list of the first 15 Medicare Locals is below.

Medicare Local	Applicant/s	State/Territory
Western Sydney Medicare Local	Went West Division of General Practice	NSW
Hunter Urban Medicare Local	Hunter Urban Division of General Practice	NSW
New England Medicare Local	New England, North West Slopes and Barwon Divisions of General Practice	NSW
Murrumbidgee Medicare Local	Riverina Division of General Practice and Primary Health Ltd, and Murrumbidgee General Practice Network	NSW
Metro North Medicare Local	GP Partners Ltd	Queensland
Gold Coast Medicare Local	General Practice Gold Coast	Queensland
Metro South Medicare Local	Greater Brisbane South Joint Venture – South East Primary Health Care Network and South East Alliance of General Practice	Queensland
Townsville-Mackay Medicare Local	Townsville Division of General Practice	Queensland
West Moreton-Oxley Medicare Local	Brisbane South Division and Ipswich and West Moreton Division of General Practice	Queensland
Central Adelaide and Hills Medicare Local	GP Partners Adelaide, Adelaide Western GP Network, Adelaide Hills Division of GP	South Australia
Country North Medicare Local	Mid North Division of Rural Medicine, Flinders and Far North Division of General Practice, Barossa GP Network, Yorke Peninsula and Eyre Peninsula Divisions of General Practice	South Australia
North West Metro Medicare Local	Osborne GP Network	Western Australia
Country South West Medicare Local	South West Health Alliance - Great Southern GP Network, GP Down South and Greater Bunbury Divisions of General Practice	Western Australia
Tasmania Medicare Local	General Practice Tasmania Limited – General Practice Tasmania, General Practice South, General Practice North, General Practice North West	Tasmania
ACT Medicare Local	ACT Division of General Practice	ACT