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## Media Release

**29 July 2019**

### Australian Government awards contracts to Aspen Medical subsidiaries to continue supporting the rural and remote healthcare workforce across Australia

The Federal Government's Department of Health has awarded 3-year contracts to two Aspen Medical subsidiaries, Remote Area Health Corps (RAHC) and the Rural Locum Assistance Program (Rural LAP), to provide support to the rural and remote health workforce across Australia. Both programs are funded through to 30 June 2022.

RAHC will continue to support urban-based health professionals to work in remote health clinics and Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations in the Northern Territory for placements of between three to 12 weeks.

RAHC health professionals currently include:

- Doctors
- Nurses
- Audiologists
- Dentists
- Dental therapists
- Dental assistants.

The first placements under the programme were in December 2008 when two registered nurses went to Ampilatwatja in the Northern Territory on a 10-day placement. Since then, more than 6,100 placements have been undertaken by 1,150 health professionals representing nearly 540 years of service.

Commenting on the announcement, Aspen Medical Executive Chairman, Glenn Keys AO said, "Since 2008, RAHC has built strong and productive partnerships with all its stakeholders and a significant pool of talented and highly-motivated health

professionals who have answered the call to be part of the effort.

“Ensuring the sustainability of this program for another three years is critical to people living in remote communities in the Northern Territory and works toward Closing the Gap in health outcomes for First Nations people.”

Rural LAP is a component of the Australian Government’s Rural Workforce Capacity Agenda. The program provides highly-qualified and credentialed locums to rural and remote locations around Australia. Subsidies funded by the Australian Government relieve the financial burden on health services and ensures ongoing service delivery during leave absences. All Aboriginal medical services throughout Australia are eligible to receive support.

The Rural LAP extends its support to:

- Obstetricians
- Anaesthetists
- Proceduralist General Practitioners (GPs) in Obstetrics and Anaesthetics
- Nurses and Midwives
- Allied Health Professionals
- Aged Care facilities
- Metropolitan GPs providing locum support for the rural locum education assistance program.

Since its inception in 2011, the program has helped subsidise over 6,500 leave requests.

“Important changes have been made over this time that have strengthened the program and helped provide greater leave coverage to the rural and remote health workforce. The Rural LAP team are excited to continue helping others take much needed leave over the next three years”, said Keys.

**ENDS**

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