Background
NSW Health has implemented a range of strategies to promote retention and recruitment of Radiation Therapists (RTs) in NSW, including the NSW Overseas Recruitment Program, revised salary packages and career structure and the RT Tutor positions. The Australian Government has provided funding for a pilot two-year distance education program to encourage RTs to return to work.

The objective of the Program is to recruit qualified RTs who have been absent from the professional workforce for a minimum of five years, and to provide targeted education and clinical experience in current technological advances and service delivery models, so that they may re-enter the workforce.

The RTW Program meets the Australian Institute of Radiography’s return to work requirements for those Radiation Therapists who need to undertake a resumption program.

Monash University developed coursework and will assess candidates throughout the Program.

In 2005, one candidate was successful and had been undertaking the Program at the South West Sydney Cancer Service.

Who are Potential Candidates for the Program?
- RTs who have obtained their qualifications, have some work experience but have been out of the workforce for a minimum of five years. The rationale is that technological advances and service delivery models will have changed significantly after five years.
- Applicants must be either an Australian citizen or have permanent residency status. Applicants who have gained their Radiation Therapy qualifications overseas may apply, however, they must have had their qualifications assessed by the Australian Institute of Radiography and be able to supply a copy of AIR’s written response.

Program Places in 2006
Funding is available for five candidates to complete the Program in 2006. In addition, funding will also be provided for three months employment for each of those candidates who successfully completed the Program. The Program will commence in mid 2006.

Coursework and Clinical Work
Monash University developed the coursework materials and will evaluate candidates’ academic component throughout the Program. Participating ROTCs will provide clinical training and evaluate clinical competence.

Each unit of study will include a distance education element and a clinical practical element, which candidates will complete concurrently at an agreed ROTC. Candidates will be expected to work through the materials provided and the associated activities in a self-directed way.

Candidates will undertake revision of fundamental principles of radiation therapy, extending and applying this in relation to working with new radio-therapeutic techniques and equipment.
At the completion of each unit of study, candidates will be required to submit to Monash University a portfolio of professional development, which demonstrates their knowledge and competence. The portfolio will consist of a workbook and additional activities. Drawing on prior knowledge and experience, candidates may be able to fast track through some of the materials.

After a minimum of 6 months full time equivalent employment ie 125 days of clinical practice, candidates will complete a competency-based assessment and submit a portfolio of plans they have produced during their clinical practice.

**Participating ROTCs**

The following ROTCs have indicated they will participate in the 2006 Program, which will commence in mid 2006:

- Newcastle Mater Misericordiae Hospital
- Westmead Hospital
- South West Sydney Cancer Service (Liverpool and Campbelltown)
- Nepean Cancer Care Centre
- Prince of Wales Hospital
- Royal North Shore Hospital
- St George Hospital
- Riverina Cancer Care Centre (Wagga Wagga) (private)
- Radiation Oncology Associates – St Vincent’s Private Hospital (Darlinghurst) (private)
- Radiation Oncology Associates – Mater Hospital (Crows Nest) (private)

While the above ROTCs have agreed to participate, the 2006 Program has funding for 5 places.

**Applying for a Position in the Program**

The closing date for applications is **8 May 2006**.

An information kit, containing the 2006 Application Form and 2006 Guidelines, can be obtained by contacting Tina Ford on 9391 9485 or emailing tford@doh.health.nsw.gov.au. Short-listed candidates will also be required to attend a ½ day work experience session followed by interview. Successful candidates will be paid a salary while doing the Program (see below).

**Terms of Employment**

Successful candidates will be employed by the ROTC at Medical Radiation Therapist Level 1 Year 1 of the current Health Employees Medical Radiation Scientists (State) Award as Exempt Employees on a fixed term contract for up to twelve months. In the event that the candidate fails the competency-based assessment, the employment contract will be terminated.

In addition, funds will also be provided for 3 months employment at the relevant ROTC for each candidate who successfully completes the 2006 Program, at Level 2 Year 3 salary of the Award.

Permanent employment would be conditional upon satisfactory completion of the Program, subject to vacancies in establishment positions, a competitive recruitment process and pending the completion of a criminal record check.

Statewide Services Development Branch
NSW Health Department 28 March 2006