

# CIRV Operational Support Co-Funding with the Department of Health August 2024

The Department has developed this document to provide the necessary information and answers to questions raised by Councils and Health Services regarding the CIRV co-funding arrangement. The document comprises the following key sections:

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. TOP 10 QUESTIONS
2. COST CLARIFICATION
3. FUTURE PLANS & SUPPORT
4. OTHER QUESTIONS

### 1. TOP 10 QUESTIONS

**Q Is the CIRV \$1.00 per immunisation fee per encounter or vaccine? e.g. if a baby has their two-month vaccines and is given 3 immunisations, is the fee \$1 or \$3?**

**A** The Department's CIRV immunisation fee relates to actual vaccinations recorded in CIRV (i.e. jabs). In this example the fee is \$3. Please note the Department will not be charging GST.

**Q How has the base funding of \$3,000/\$4,000 per annum and the \$1 vaccination fee been determined?**

**A** Given the current fiscal position in the state, the Department is seeking council co-funding of CIRV based on sharing with the Department the costs of level 1, 2 and 3 support, Microsoft licensing, Azure cloud hosting and major enhancements like the current AIR integration upgrade. The base fees to \$3,000 for FY24/25 and \$4,000 for FY25/26 (plus \$1 per vaccination i.e. per jab noted in question above). Also noting that a cap of \$25k has been set on total per annum fees, so no Council or Health Service would pay more than \$25k in a year. Please note the Department will not be charging GST.

**Q If a Council moved off CIRV, how will the Department support my Council and what provisions would be in place to ensure access to Council data in CIRV?**

**A** While the Department encourages Councils and Health Services to continue to use CIRV, if deciding to discontinue the use of CIRV:

- Councils and Health Services need to confirm this intention by 30 November 2024;
- the Department will provide extracts of their CIRV data at that date, after which CIRV access will be revoked within a timeframe to be agreed by Council or Health Service.

- transitioning away from CIRV to an alternate platform will incur dis-benefits in the form of transition, change, training and adoption costs, which Councils and Health Services will need to fund.
- the Department has no expectations of, nor input to, Councils' or Health Services alternate solutions to CIRV.

**Q Is there a roadmap for CIRV that outlines future plans for enhancements and upgrades?**

**A** The immediate plan for CIRV enhancement in FY24/25 is to ensure the CIRV/AIR integration is compliant with the new requirements prescribed by Services Australia. The Department will consult to develop a roadmap for future enhancements, ideally via a CIRV User Advisory Group (CUAG) (to be established in due course).

**Q Given that Council budgets for 2024/25 are already set, shouldn't there be a delay to allow time for councils to be more properly consulted and to consider other options?**

**A** The Department acknowledges the timing of this decision is a challenge given budgets have already been set for FY24/25. Consultation was compromised due to the recency of budget issue, and time taken to explore the range of options that may avoid cost impost on Councils. Councils and Health Services are now provided until 30 November 2024 to decide whether to continue using CIRV.

**Q How can we justify staying on CIRV if the associated costs exceed other market solutions?**

**A:** Councils will need to consider the benefits of using the CIRV including its shared state-wide database, ongoing Department support and future enhancement approach, against the need for transition costs such as training, onboarding and data migration costs should Councils choose to transition to another solution.

**Q Will Councils need to undertake a procurement process to pay CIRV fees?**

**A** This is dependent upon Council's own procurement policies. Under the co-funding model, no council would pay more than \$25k in a year.

**Q Can the Department consider changing the \$2 immunisation fee from per jab to per encounter?**

**A** After consultation with councils the Department has halved the CIRV vaccination fee from \$2 to \$1 per vaccination. (i.e. per jab).

**Q Councils transitioning off CIRV will require at least 6 months to make this happen, so how will this be accommodated by the Department?**

**A** The Department requires Councils to confirm by 30 November 2024 whether they intend on remaining on CIRV and will support Councils to migrate off CIRV by providing the relevant data from CIRV.

## **2. COST CLARIFICATIONS**

**Q Are councils charge the same fees regardless of their size?**

**A** That is correct but noting the fees have been significantly reduced based on further consultations to a base fee of \$3,000 for FY24/25 and \$4,000 for FY25/26 plus \$1 per vaccination (i.e. per jab). Also noting that a cap of \$25k has been set on total per annum fees, so no Council or Health Service would pay more than \$25k in a year.

**Q If a child has a non-funded vaccine, would a \$2.00 charge also be required to be paid?**

**A** In regard to the CIRV co-funding arrangement, the now reduced \$1 immunisation fee relates to actual vaccinations recorded in CIRV (i.e. jabs), whether funded or non-funded by the Department.

**Q Can you provide assurance that there won't be any further price increases, particularly if only a portion of the councils choose to adopt this program?**

**A** The Department is committed to supporting CIRV and has structured the co-funding model to be independent of the number of councils using CIRV.

**Q How will Cost Recovery work in this new co-funding model?**

**A** The base fee will be invoiced in September 2024 and the vaccination fees will be invoiced in June 2025 for the full 12 month period (1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025).

**Q Could billing be charged end of Year rather than per FY?**

**A** The Department will be invoicing for vaccinations from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024 through to 30 June 2025, so a financial year basis is preferred.

**Q Was competitiveness looked at when deciding these \$2 per jab costs? Alternative services can be used as they will be cheaper, but it is not preferred as our Council is trained on CIRV.**

**A** The Department has, upon further consultation significantly reduced CIRV fees to include a base fee of \$3,000 for FY24/25 and \$4,000 for FY25/26 plus \$1 per vaccination (i.e. per jab), and a cap of \$25k on total per annum fees, so no Council or Health Service would pay more than \$25k in a year.

**Q Is the base fee refundable if we terminate our use of CIRV?**

**A** The Department is seeking commitment to CIRV by 30 November 2024, which would come with payment of the base fee of \$3,000. This fee is not refundable if a Council subsequently decides to transition to another solution.

**Q With this new costing model, what is the amount eHealth predicts they will raise, compared to the actual cost of maintaining the Program?**

**A** The total CIRV fees received will be dependent on how many councils continue to use CIRV and how many immunisations occur. Suffice to say that such fees are less than the Department's co-funding contribution.

**Q Will there be financial remuneration for Councils participating in product testing and providing consulting to improve the system?**

**A** The Department will be seeking volunteers from Councils and Health Services to participate in a soon to be established CIRV User Advisory Group (CUAG) to identify CIRV improvements required, i.e. as part of a shared community of use and benefits to all Councils and Health Services. It is not expected that such involvement would be compensated.

**Q Please explain further the thinking behind making the per jab charge retrospective to 1 July 24?**

**A** The co-funding model is based on the whole of financial year and as such all vaccinations in 24/25 are included, albeit at a significantly reduced fee of \$1 per vaccination (i.e. per jab).

**Q What guarantees can be provided on the costs to council in years post 25/26? e.g. will the \$1 increase by CPI over time?**

**A** The Department will take this under advisement. Most of the costs included in the model are from vendor licensing and infrastructure hosting, which will likely carry an annual increase applied that is mostly uncontrollable.

### **3. FUTURE PLANS & SUPPORT**

**Q Could you please outline the defined level of support, escalation methods, and communication formats associated with this service?**

**A** The Department will retain the current levels of support, which includes Microsoft licencing, hosting infrastructure and support staff for queries, issues, bug fixes and enhancements, such as for AIR Integration upgrade required in 2024, and specifically:

- CIRV ongoing costs encompasses Microsoft licencing, Microsoft Azure Cloud hosting and Level 1, 2 and 3 application support from department staff.
- CIRV application support is during business hours 8.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday, supporting:
  - First level support (via either Support@cirv.vic.gov.au or 1300 024 760) to support councils with CIRV application queries, focusing on resolving queries on first call.
  - Second level application support to triage application issues, “how do I” type queries, access and technical issues triaged to third level support to resolve.
  - Third level support to undertake software defect resolution and minor enhancements.
- Application management, including release management, change management, and 6-monthly releases of minor and major enhancements through planning and product roadmap. This will be undertaken by the third level support in consultation with councils.

**Q CIRV was to provide a fully digital platform, but this is not the case at the moment. And will this new co-funding model fund this eventual change?**

**A** The immediate plan for CIRV enhancement is to ensure AIR integration compliance with Services Australia, which is due by 31 December 2024. The Department will consult to develop a roadmap for future enhancements, ideally via a CIRV User Advisory Group (CUAG). Such future enhancement considerations may include other languages, support manuals, out-of-business hours sessions support, SMS reminders/links etc.

### **4. OTHER QUESTIONS**

**Q Originally this was advertised as a free of charge service to councils. Why the change?**

**A** Given the current fiscal position in the state, the Department is seeking council co-funding of CIRV based on sharing with the Department the costs of ongoing operational support of CIRV.

**Q Is there a minimum number of users CIRV will need to stay online?**

**A** The Department is committed to supporting CIRV and has structured the co-funding model to be independent of the number of councils using CIRV.

**Q Are there any conversations regarding a funding increase to our Council’s immunisation program?**

**A** No.

**Q Would upgrades to CIRV be funded by the Councils?**

- A** No, the Department would fund these upgrades internally. The Department will consult to develop a roadmap for future enhancements, ideally via a CIRV User Advisory Group (CUAG). Such future enhancement considerations will be prioritised and implemented within reason.
- Q** **Is there any re-consideration around the Department regarding this change?**
- A** The Department has, upon further consultation significantly reduced CIRV fees to include a base fee of \$3,000 for FY24/25 and \$4,000 for FY25/26 plus \$1 per vaccination (i.e. per jab), and a cap of \$25k on total per annum fees, so no Council or Health Service would pay more than \$25k in a year.
- Q** **A list of things that would come with CIRV and what it would provide to the Department, so we can look at what benefits it has over other services, so we can compare to competitors out there?**
- A** The Department will retain the current levels of support, which includes Microsoft licencing, hosting infrastructure and support staff for queries, issues, bug fixes and enhancements, such as for AIR Integration upgrade required in 2024. Also, immediate plan for CIRV enhancement is to ensure AIR integration compliance with Services Australia, after which the Department will consult to develop a roadmap for future enhancements, ideally via a CIRV User Advisory Group (CUAG). And more specifically:
- CIRV ongoing costs encompasses Microsoft licensing, Microsoft Azure Cloud hosting and Level 1, 2 and 3 application support from department staff.
  - CIRV application support is during business hours 8.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday, supporting:
    - First level support (via either Support@cirv.vic.gov.au or 1300 024 760) to support councils with CIRV application queries, focusing on resolving queries on first call.
    - Second level application support to triage application issues, “how do I” type queries, access and technical issues triaged to third level support to resolve.
    - Third level support to undertake software defect resolution and minor enhancements.
  - Application management, including release management, change management, and 6-monthly releases of minor and major enhancements through planning and product roadmap. This will be undertaken by the third level support in consultation with councils.
- Q** **Is there any consideration to give councils more time to consider their positions?**
- A** The Department requires confirmation of Councils and Health Services remaining on CIRV by 30 November 2024.
- Q** **Will there be a Service Level Agreement to be sent out?**
- A** The Department will prepare appropriate document to govern the arrangement with Councils and Health Services. This will include matters such as service levels, enhancements, and commercials etc.
- Q** **If CIRV was to close down, later in April 2025 our council will have a major problem with our in-flight school program underway for thousands of students and become hard to handle as we’d be using multiple platforms.**

- A** The Department is committed to supporting CIRV and has structured the co-funding model to be independent of the number of councils using CIRV.
- Q** **We are currently funded by calendar year from DOH and paid each May - so it doesn't make sense for reporting purposes to then pay the \$1 jab per financial year. In fact, DOH may as well keep the money DOH provides per encounter as we just have to pay it back.**
- A** The CIRV co-funding model is independent of other Department immunisation subsidies.
- Q** **What changes will happen to funding vaccination receipts for Councils that do not go ahead with CIRV?**
- A** Councils not on CIRV will still be required to report their immunisation data to the Department to receive Department subsidies.
- Q** **Families will potentially be on-charged the fee per jab - how can this be managed so that vaccine uptake isn't compromised.**
- A** The Department cannot comment on how Councils and Health Services source funds for CIRV co-funding fees.
- Q** **Has it been considered that Council's will minimise their services to reduce costs and therefore impact essential public health services - why not remove local government from the PH & W Act and immunisations can then be the responsibility of the health system in Victoria and the cost borne by the state government?**
- A** The Department cannot comment on how councils source funds for CIRV co-funding fees.
- Q** **In relation to CUAG if requests are logged, assessed and the solutions identified and tested, then this process could take longer than 6 months before being available for use?**
- A** It is the intention of the Department to provide major enhancements on a 6 month cycle. Minor enhancements including bug fixes will be more frequent, subject to the size and complexity of the change.
- Q** **For councils who subcontract out the immunisation service to a larger provider, is the funding model applied to the provider or to each individual council that the provider delivers for?**
- A** The co-funding model is tied to the Council for which vaccinations are for.
- Q** **Invoicing in September while allowing to 30 November to confirm commitment for ongoing use of CIRV seems illogical. Will a pro rata fee be considered while Councils apply due diligence and undertake an environmental scan of alternate vendors leading up to 30 November?**
- A** Councils still deciding on whether to remain with CIRV can hold their base fee payment, but the Department would like this decision by 30 November 2024.
- Q** **Can you please advise the current limit of financial liability and any liability cap in place between the State Government and Councils currently using CIRV (under the current terms of use agreement)?**
- A** The Department will take this under advisement.

**Q Will our data remain on CIRV if we cease to use it?**

**A** Yes, temporarily. This will be for records retention purposes only until such time that Council(s) have transitioned to a new solution or method for capturing immunisations, and the data is no longer required on CIRV.

**Q For Council's not going onto CIRV, will those Council's still have read-only access to their data?**

**A** No, as Councils not using CIRV will no longer have access to CIRV and will need to rely on the CIRV extract of their data.