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| New Victorian legal arrangements for Rural and Isolated Practice Registered Nurses |
| Factsheet for nurses who have a Scheduled Medicines (Rural and Isolated Practice) Endorsement on their registration – Updated December 2021  |
| OFFICIAL |

# What is happening and why?

Victoria has updated the legislation to govern the practice of registered nurses who currently have a Scheduled Medicines (Rural and Isolated Practice) Endorsement (RIP endorsement) on their registration from the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA).

Following national consultation, the NMBA has indicated its intent to cease the endorsement of registered nurses who complete special courses of study in rural and isolated scheduled medicines practice in 2022, and the related additional 10 hours of continuing professional development in scheduled medicines practice.

As Victorian legislation specifically refers to the RIP endorsement, new legal mechanisms are required in Victoria to enable Rural and Isolated Practice Endorsed Registered Nurses (RIPERNs) to continue their medicines practice and ensure timely access to care and medications in the rural urgent care centres and bush nursing settings for their local communities.

On 1 February 2022, Victoria is changing its drugs and poisons regulatory scheme to safeguard the RIPERN model of care.

The Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2017 (DPCS Regulations) now includes a provision for the Secretary of the Department of Health to establish a new class of registered nurse – an approved registered nurse – according to specified criteria. In addition, the Secretary can approve the obtaining, possession, sale, supply or administration of Schedule 2, 3, 4 and 8 poisons in certain conditions and according to health management protocols in the Primary Clinical Care Manual.

These authorising conditions are similar to existing circumstances, with additional conditions requiring evidence of professional experience and record keeping.

# What does it mean for me? What do I have to do?

* Your day-to-day practise will not change.
* The role title will change from RIPERN to Rural and Isolated Practice Registered Nurse (RIPRN).
* Nurses who hold the NMBA RIP endorsement on 1 February 2022 will not be subject to Secretary Approval conditions specifically relating to previous work experience and education.
* You will still be eligible for the additional payment for gaining specialist RIPRN qualifications through the current enterprise agreement.
* You will no longer rely on the NMBA RIP endorsement for your practise, and you and your employer (i.e. rural health services’ urgent care centre, bush nursing centre or bush nursing hospital) will be responsible for ensuring you are practising in accordance with the DPCS Regulations including the Secretary Approval.
* You are responsible for keeping certified records of your qualifications and employment as set out in the Secretary Approval and must provide them to your employer.
* You will no longer need to renew your endorsement with the NMBA if you practise in Victoria following 1 February 2022.
* In the event that you change employers and require evidence of your previous RIP endorsement, please contact the NMBA.
* Just like the previous arrangements, you must be working in a designated rural urgent care centre, bush nursing centre or bush nursing hospital, and use the Health Management Protocols within the Primary Clinical Care Manual to inform your scheduled medicines practice.
* You will need to undertake continuing professional development (CPD) in line with Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia Standards and ensure it is related to your practice as a RIPRN. Following removal of the NMBA endorsement, RIPRNs will no longer have to undertake the additional CPD requirements associated with the endorsement.

# Where can I find more information?

You can find more detailed information about the changes in our guide for health services and RIPRNs, located on the following website <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/rural-health/rural-and-isolated-practice-registered-nurse>>.

There is also a website listing Secretary Approvals in Victoria, at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/drugs-and-poisons/drugs-poisons-legislation/secretary-approvals>.

The Victoria Government Gazette website lists new and updated legislation and regulations, at <http://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette\_bin/recent\_gazettes.cfm?bct=home|recentgazettes>.

A link to the amended Drugs and Poisons Regulations 2017 is available here <<https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/statutory-rules/drugs-poisons-and-controlled-substances-regulations-2017/008>>.

You can also contact your local Department of Health representative or send your queries to nmw@dhhs.vic.gov.au