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| New Victorian legal arrangements for new Rural and Isolated Practice Registered Nurses |
| Factsheet for future Rural and Isolated Practice Registered Nurses (RIPRNs) – September 2021 |
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# What is happening and why?

Victoria has updated the legislation that governs the practice of registered nurses who currently have a Scheduled Medicines (Rural and Isolated Practice) Endorsement (the 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 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 title will be rural and isolated practice registered nurse (RIPRN).
* If you are currently studying an NMBA-approved program of study leading to the RIP endorsement or thinking of undertaking this study in the future, from 1 February 2022, to practice as a RIPRN in Victoria, you must meet the competence, education and experience requirements specified in the Secretary Approval. This includes:
* be registered by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia as a registered nurse; and
* be assessed by their employer as being competent to obtain, possess, sell, supply and administer Schedule 2, 3, 4 and 8 poisons in accordance with the Health Management Protocols within the Primary Clinical Care Manual that is current at the time; and
* since 1 July 2010, have successfully completed one of the following two courses:
  + - the Rural and Isolated Practice (Scheduled Medicines) Registered Nurse Course at Queensland Health’s the Cunningham Centre, or
    - the Graduate Certificate of Health (Scheduled Medicines) at the University of Southern Queensland; and
* have spent a minimum of one year at an average of two shifts per week working as a registered nurse, in one of the following settings:
* urgent, emergency or critical care setting, or
* rural or rural isolated practice setting[[1]](#footnote-2); and
* maintain appropriate records as evidence of these competence, education and experience requirements.
* To practise as a RIPRN, you must also be working in a designated rural urgent care centre, bush nursing centre or bush nursing hospital.
* You will not need to apply for an endorsement from the NMBA.
* You will still be eligible for the additional payment for gaining specialist RIPRN qualifications through the current enterprise agreement.
* 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 need to undertake continuing professional development in line with Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia Standards and ensure it is related to your practice as a RIPRN.

# 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>.

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>>.

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>.

You can also contact your local Department of Health representative or send your queries to [nmw@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:nmw@dhhs.vic.gov.au)

1. That is, within a Monash Modified Model Category MM3 – MM7 (inclusive) location. See the Monash Modified Model, as maintained by the Commonwealth Department of Health: https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/health-workforce/health-workforce-classifications/modified-monash-model. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)