

Fact sheet

Updated April 2022

Transitioning the Registration standard: Endorsement for scheduled medicines for registered nurses (rural and isolated practice) to retirement

Introduction

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) undertakes functions as set by the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law). The NMBA regulates the practice of nursing and midwifery in Australia, and one of its key roles is to protect the public. The NMBA does this by developing standards, codes and guidelines which together establish the requirements of the professional practice framework for the professional and safe practice of nurses and midwives in Australia.

The *Registration standard: Endorsement for scheduled medicines for registered nurses (rural and isolated practice)* (RIP endorsement) describes the requirements for a registered nurse (RN) to apply for and maintain the RIP endorsement on their registration. Previously it enabled RNs in Queensland and Victoria to obtain, supply and administer schedule 2, 3, 4 and 8 medicines in rural and isolated practice settings. The RIP endorsement was not required for RNs to obtain, supply and administer medicines in other states and territories.

Importantly, the NMBA does not set standards for education or endorse the registration of RNs in specialised areas of nursing practice. Therefore, holding the RIP endorsement does not imply an RN's competence to work in rural and isolated practice, only that they are qualified to obtain, supply, and administer scheduled medicines under protocol.

The following questions answer common queries about the retirement of the RIP endorsement.

Key messages

- The RIP endorsement will be retired in 2022.
- RNs who currently hold the RIP endorsement and meet the requirements set by their state or territory's relevant medicines and poisons legislation, are still be able to practice in rural and isolated settings and obtain, supply and administer scheduled medicines.
- The day-to-day practice of RNs who currently hold the RIP endorsement on their registration remains unchanged.

Why is the RIP endorsement being retired?

This change is happening because the RIP endorsement is no longer required for RNs to obtain, supply and administer schedule 2, 3, 4 and 8 medicines in rural and isolated practice settings in any Australian state or territory.

As Victoria and Queensland (the only two states that required the RIP endorsement) have now finalised alternative regulatory mechanisms for RNs to obtain, supply and administer schedule 2, 3, 4 and 8 medicines in rural and isolated practice settings, there is no longer the need for additional regulation by the NMBA.

The retirement of the RIP endorsement brings national consistency to medicines practice whilst ensuring RNs can continue to safely supply and administer medicines in rural and isolated practice settings.

These changes reduce regulation at a national level and ensure rural and isolated practice RNs are best positioned to practise safely, professionally and effectively, to their full scope of their practice.

When will the retirement of the RIP endorsement be completed?

As Victoria and Queensland have now finalised new regulatory frameworks that govern the medicines practice of rural and isolated practice RNs, the NMBA is writing to Health Ministers to recommend that the RIP endorsement is retired in 2022. All rural and isolated practice RNs will be notified when the RIP endorsement is retired.

How will I be able to obtain, supply and administer certain scheduled medicines when the RIP endorsement is retired?

The safe use of medicines by RNs is now regulated through medicines and poisons legislation, local regulations and health service policies and/or protocols in all Australian states and territories. The regulatory changes in Victoria and Queensland will not affect the day-to-day practice of rural and isolated practice RNs who currently hold the RIP endorsement on their registration in any Australian state or territory.

Practising in Victoria

In February 2022, Victoria finalised changes to its drugs and poisons regulatory scheme. A new legal mechanism called *secretary approval* now enables rural and isolated practice RNs to continue or commence their medicines practice under the protocols of their health service. The day-to-day practice of Victorian RNs who currently hold the RIP endorsement remains unchanged.

Under this model, health service employers are responsible for ensuring rural and isolated practice RNs are competent to obtain, supply and administer schedule 2, 3, 4 and 8 medicines in accordance with the health management protocols within the *Primary Clinical Care Manual*. Rural and isolated practice RNs must also ensure they are practising in line with other secretary approval conditions including record keeping and location of employment. For further information on the Victorian changes, please visit the [Victorian Department of Health](#).

Practising in Queensland

Queensland's new medicines and poisons regulatory framework came into effect in September 2021. This framework enables rural and isolated practice RNs to continue to obtain, supply and administer certain medicines via an *extended practice authority*. The new framework requires rural and isolated practice RNs to have completed a program of study relevant to the use of medicines in providing emergency and acute care in rural and isolated practice and be practising in an isolated practice area or at a rural hospital. The day-to-day practice of Queensland RNs who currently hold the RIP endorsement remains unchanged. For further information on the Queensland changes, please visit [Queensland Health](#).

I currently hold an RIP endorsement, but my principal place of practice is not in Victoria or Queensland. How will I be impacted by this change?

States and territories outside of Victoria and Queensland already have processes in place to authorise/enable RNs to obtain, supply and administer certain scheduled medicines according to protocol/policy without the need for the RN to hold an endorsement on their registration. RNs who currently hold the RIP endorsement in these jurisdictions will not be impacted by these changes.

Can I renew my RIP endorsement this year?

To support a smooth transition, the NMBA has provided the option for RNs who currently hold the RIP endorsement to renew for the 2022 renewal period. However, since the RIP endorsement is no longer a requirement, RNs who do not renew the endorsement will still be able to continue their medicines practice in rural and isolated practice settings and their day-to-day practice will not change.

From next year, the RIP endorsement will be retired and you won't be asked to renew your endorsement again.

What about continuing professional development (CPD)?

The NMBA's *Registration standard: Continuing professional development* requires that all RNs must complete 20 hours of CPD per registration period (at minimum). RNs who hold the RIP endorsement on their registration must complete 10 additional hours relating to obtaining, supplying and administering scheduled medicines.

RNs who choose to renew their RIP endorsement in this year's registration renewal cycle will still be required to complete the additional CPD in accordance with the *Registration standard: Continuing professional development*. For RNs who hold the endorsement for less than 12 months, pro rata CPD hours apply. Please see the [Registration standard: Continuing professional development](#) for further information.

RNs who do not renew their RIP endorsement are not required to complete the additional 10 hours of CPD relevant to the endorsement.

I am enrolled in a program of study that leads to the RIP endorsement. Can I still apply for the RIP endorsement?

The RIP endorsement is no longer required to be able to supply medicines under protocol, so you do not need to apply for an endorsement.

What do I need to do now?

RNs who hold the RIP endorsement do not need to take any further action at this time. For information specific to your state or territory, please refer to your local health department's website.

How did we get here?

The RIP endorsement existed in Queensland and Victoria prior to the commencement of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) in 2010. At this time, it was agreed that the RIP endorsement would transition into the National Scheme to enable RNs with the endorsement to continue to obtain, supply and administer medicines.

In 2013, the RIP endorsement was due for review. As the approach to the RIP endorsement was not adopted nationally, the NMBA consulted on expanding the endorsement beyond just the rural and isolated practice area. This proposal was not supported.

In 2015, the NMBA consulted on the retirement and phasing out of the RIP endorsement as it was not required nationally. This was supported by the majority of jurisdictions except Queensland and Victoria.

In October 2016, the then Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (AHWMC) Health Workforce Principle Committee (HWPC) recommended to the NMBA that the RIP endorsement be continued for two more years to enable the NMBA to work with Queensland and Victoria to develop a transition solution.

During this time, the NMBA requested advice from the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) regarding whether graduates from NMBA-approved programs of RN study were equipped with the requisite skills and knowledge required to demonstrate competent prescribing under the protocols/policies of their health service.

In 2017, this position was consulted on nationally and stakeholder feedback supported that an endorsement is not required to enable RNs to supply under protocol/policy.

As Queensland and Victoria have now introduced new medicines and poisons regulatory frameworks, the NMBA is retiring the RIP endorsement.

For more information

- [Registration standard: Endorsement for scheduled medicines for registered nurses \(rural and isolated practice\)](#)
- Visit the Victorian Department of Health [website](#) to access further information about the Victorian Department of Health's new model for rural and isolated practice RNs
- Visit the Queensland Health [website](#) to access further information about Queensland Health's new legislative framework for rural and isolated practice RNs
- Visit www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au under *Contact us* to lodge an online enquiry form
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (in Australia) or +61 3 9275 9009 (overseas callers)

Document history

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| Approved by: | Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia |
| Date commenced: | November 2021 |
| Next review due: | not required |
| Policy history: | Is this a new policy? N Does this policy amend or update an existing policy? Y If so which version v1.0 Does this policy replace another policy with a different title? N |

| Approval date | Version | Reason for change |
|---------------|---------|--|
| April 2022 | v2.0 | New medicines and poisons regulatory frameworks are now in place in Queensland and Victoria thereby allowing the NMBA to retire the RIP endorsement. |
| October 2021 | v1.0 | n/a |