BAC-BR-18471

Professor Euan M Wallace AM

Secretary
Department of Health

50 Lonsdale Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Secretary

**STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS FOR DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH’S MEDICINES AND POISONS REGULATION BRANCH**

I am pleased to provide you with my expectations for the Department of Health’s (the department) Medicines and Poisons Regulation branch to guide the regulator’s business planning processes.

In my portfolio, as Minister for Health I administer a range of Acts and regulations designed to promote wellbeing and to protect the health of the Victorian community. I am committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all Victorians including protecting the Victorian community from the risks and harms associated with medicines and poisons.

As Minister for Health, I am jointly responsible for administering the *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981* (the Act) and this guidance should be read in the context of the objectives, obligations and functions outlined in this Act. This guidance should also be read in the context of any other legislative and non-legislative obligations on the Medicines and Poisons Regulation branch.

Based on consultation with department about the government’s priorities and emerging risks, my expectations for the Medicines and Poisons Regulation branch are as follows.

* Undertake a review of the current risk-based licensing framework and implement updated policy for assigning risk attributes that will increase capacity to proactively monitor high-risk licenced entities.
* Further enhance the SafeScript system to provide full, end-to-end coverage for all Victorian patients being treated in the community or in hospital, in Victoria or interstate.
* Reduce the administrative burden on clinicians by implementing a new SafeScript Regulatory Module system, which can integrate Victoria’s Schedule 8 permit system into SafeScript.
* Progress regulatory amendments according to key priorities of the Minister and Secretary including amendments to the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2017.
* Provide expert medicines and poisons regulation advice relevant to the operation of the Act and reforms that expand the access and use of medicines and poisons in Victoria, such as the Community Pharmacy State-wide pilot for protocol-based prescribing by pharmacists

In addition, I expect all regulators in the health portfolio to commit to and action:

* Contributing to health, wellbeing, and safety outcomes for Aboriginal people and the advancement of Aboriginal self-determination.
* Climate change adaptation and enhancing health system resilience through the improvement of environmental sustainability.

I request the department’s Medicines and Poisons Regulation branch to incorporate these expectations into their business plans and include milestones for when the team will meet these expectations, and report on progress. The business plans should also include appropriate milestones to review the content of this letter and to advise me when it needs to be updated or renewed. At any time, I may request that you report on meeting my expectations or issue a new statement of expectations letter.

I further request the department’s Medicines and Poisons Regulation branch to undertake a light touch review of the expectations in this letter as part of their annual reporting obligations and to advise me if there are any refinements they would recommend.

I look forward to the Medicines and Poisons Regulation branch working continuously towards achieving best practice in the administration and enforcement of regulation.

Yours sincerely

**The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP**

 1 / 7 / 2023