

FAQs

What changes are occurring and why?

The TPA is an independent statutory authority Established under the *Pharmacy Control Act 2001*. The primary functions of the TPA are to administer a scheme of pharmacy business premises registration and ownership approval, and to ensure the services that are provided from those premises are of the highest possible professional standard.

The TPA has experienced sustainability challenges for several years related to insufficient fee revenue and resourcing of day-to-day administrative and regulatory activities. Exceptional grant funding received from the DoH over the last two years has supported maintaining the TPA's inspection program, ensuring that all pharmacies in Tasmania have been inspected within the expected three-year cycle. However, this is not a sustainable approach to support ongoing Authority operations.

The Associate Secretary for DoH has approved the TPA's Registrar, licensing and inspection duties to be transitioned into the DoH subject to the recruitment of appropriately qualified personnel.

What day-to-day functions of the TPA are transitioning to the Department of Health?

The day-to-day administrative functions of the TPA that will be transitioned into DoH include duties of the Registrar, licensing and inspection activities.

The DoH will employ expertise to support ongoing TPA functions. These employees will be employed by the DoH and reside within the Pharmaceutical Services Branch.

What functions are remaining with the TPA?

The TPA will remain an independent statutory authority and continue to govern pharmacy premises regulation. The TPA will retain overall responsibility for the regulation of pharmacy business ownership.

What will the DoH be responsible for?

The DoH will continue to regulate the compliance of pharmacists with the *Poisons Act 1971* (and subordinate *Poisons Regulations 2018*). Matters identified by the DoH relating to compliance with the *Pharmacy Control Act 2001* will be referred to the TPA for assessment and action where necessary. Referral to Ahpra by either regulator will occur consistent with established mandatory national reporting requirements adopted under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Tasmania) Act 2010*.

What is the timeframe for these changes to occur?

It is anticipated that changes will occur from 1 November 2024.

What is happening to contractors positions in TPA?

Contracts for individuals currently performing functions for the TPA which are being transitioned to the DoH will be scheduled to end once the transition to DoH is completed. It is anticipated that changes will occur from 1 November 2024. Contractors will be given a minimum of four weeks' notice in accordance with the terms of their contract.

All contractors are welcome to apply for any position advertised by DoH in support of the ongoing TPA functions.

What changes will pharmacies see?

The transition of day-to-day administrative duties to within the DoH will support the ongoing sustainability of the TPA and provide efficiencies in the regulatory functions of both the TPA and the DoH through:

- amalgamation of some compliance activities pertaining to the *Pharmacy Control Act 2001* and the *Poisons Act 1971*
- reduced utilisation of external contractors
- reduced single-person dependence and resultant risks to operational continuity
- access to broader expertise within the DoH to support upkeep of the legislation and associated fees framework
- consolidation of compliance records into a single resource.

Pharmacy owners and staff will benefit from having a single point of day-to-day contact for their regulatory obligations under both the *Pharmacy Control Act 2001* and *Poisons Act 1971*, and a reduction in the duplication of compliance audits when inspections are amalgamated.

Beyond this, pharmacies are expected to see little change.

What does this mean for fees payable by pharmacy owners?

Increases to fees proposed in 2023 and supported by stakeholders during consultation failed to proceed through the parliamentary process. This has exacerbated the financial sustainability challenges for the TPA. Whilst efficiencies have been identified in the new administrative approach, the ongoing financial viability of the TPA is heavily reliant on the introduction of future changes to the fee structure. These changes will likely include significant fee increases and are anticipated to commence from 1 July 2025.

Who to speak to for more information?

During the transition period, contact details for the TPA will remain unchanged as follows:

Registrar phone: 0417752346

Registrar email: registrar@pharmacyauthority.tas.gov.au

Any future changes to these contact details will be circulated as they occur.