Australian Government

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Statement of Intent

Introduction

This Statement of Intent (SOI) responds to the Statement of Expectations (SOE) for the Office of Drug Control provided by the Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care on 19 January 2026. The SOI sets out my intentions regarding how the Office of Drug Control will deliver on the Assistant Minister's expectations to carry out its regulatory functions and exercise its powers in line with the Australian Government's current policy objectives and directions.

Overview

The SOI forms part of the Government's Regulatory Policy, Practice & Performance Framework (RPPPF) and was prepared in accordance with the guidance in Resource Management Guide 128 - Regulator Performance (RMG-128).

The SOI covers the regulatory functions of the Office of Drug Control within the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

The Office of Drug Control exercises powers under domestic legislation in support of Australia's obligations under international drug conventions. This is achieved through administering the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956, Customs (Prohibited Exports) Regulations 1958, *Narcotic Drugs Act 1967*, Narcotic Drugs Regulation 2016, *Narcotic Drugs (Licence Charges) Act 2016*, Narcotic Drugs (Licence Charges) Regulation 2016 and the *Psychotropic Substances Act 1976*.

Under this legislation, the Office of Drug Control has responsibility for:

- the import, export and manufacture of controlled drugs and other controlled substances and products, such as vaping goods and kava.
- the cultivation, manufacture and production of cannabis for medicinal or scientific purposes to support Australia's international obligations.

Supporting broader government policies around productivity and growth

I am committed to delivering on the Assistant Minister's expectations by upholding best practice regulation, including building the necessary data and digital capability. In doing so, I will balance robust regulatory oversight with the need to foster productivity, encourage innovation, enable sustainable growth, and support the ongoing evolution of regulatory systems.

Guided by the RPPPF, I will continue to modernise our approach by embracing digital innovation, streamlining processes, and reducing unnecessary regulatory burden wherever possible. The Office of Drug Control will continue to exercise its powers and functions in good faith and to the best of its ability and ensure regulation remains fit-for-purpose, proportionate and responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities, thereby supporting both public value and economic resilience.

Commitment to align with the RMG-128 and RPPPF

Consistent with principles of regulatory stewardship, regulation should protect public health and safety while remaining efficient to administer and comply with legislative requirements and Australia's international obligations. This involves a whole-of-system approach, proactive collaboration, and ongoing review and maintenance of regulatory systems.

Regulatory reform agenda

The Office of Drug Control will contribute to the regulatory reform agenda by:

- reviewing regulatory functions and processes to identify opportunities to reduce duplication and streamline regulation, boosting efficiency and productivity. This includes engaging with other regulatory bodies to explore harmonisation opportunities without compromising core regulatory protections
- acting in accordance with regulator best practice in its decision-making, policies, processes and communication practices to maximise transparency and minimise compliance costs
- applying the RMG 128 to its regulatory functions to assess its performance and engagement with stakeholders
- incorporating regulator performance reporting into entity reporting processes, as guided by RMG 128 under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and *Public Governance and Performance and Accountability Rule 2014*, to enhance transparency and accountability. This includes the publication of an Annual Business Plan
- undertaking compliance activities proportionate to risk and resource requirements and minimising unnecessary regulatory burden. As part of this the Office of Drug Control will review and amend, as necessary, its risk framework and matrices; and
- considering opportunities to revise cost recovery arrangements to support the Office of Drug Control's regulatory functions in line with the Government's cost recovery framework.

Principles of regulator best practice

The Office of Drug Control will implement best practice principles, regularly evaluate systems, and share expertise with other regulators to drive improved outcomes as detailed below:

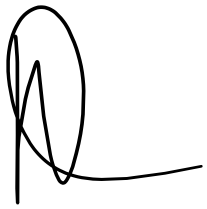
- acting in accordance with the best practice principles of the RMG 128 and the RPPPF and follow good corporate governance guided by the PGPA Act
- maintaining a proportionate, risk-based regulatory framework for its regulatory functions

- strengthening the data and digital capabilities to build organisational data capability and digital literacy to support secure and effective use of data and improve risk management. Digital solutions will make regulatory engagement easier for industry, streamline regulatory processes, allow proactive risk management to support evidence-based reforms, and improve productivity through the appropriate use of artificial intelligence
- ensuring there is open, transparent and consistent engagement and collaboration with stakeholders in the development of guidance and proposed business improvements, regulatory policy changes and implementation of regulatory functions. Relevant stakeholders include regulated entities, international counterparts, industry associations, state and territory departments, law enforcement agencies and Commonwealth departments and regulators
- continuously monitor, review and improve regulatory policies and processes in response to changes in technology, industry practices, international regulation, and community expectations
- identifying opportunities to improve regulatory functions by leveraging intelligence, data, technology and capability to disrupt, prevent and identify risks, and initiate effective compliance and enforcement actions; and
- ensuring that compliance, education, and enforcement activities that are data and intelligence-led, effectively deter non-compliance and support a commitment to regulatory stewardship and public health protection.

Relationship with Minister and Portfolio

The Office of Drug Control recognises its responsibility in supporting the Assistant Minister and the Minister, the broader government, and the portfolio in carrying out its regulatory duties. We will maintain and strengthen this constructive relationship through regular, timely, and transparent engagement with the Assistant Minister, ensuring that policy and regulatory developments are consistently communicated. The Office of Drug Control SOI along with the Office of Drug Control SOE will be incorporated into our performance reporting, including corporate planning and annual reporting processes. This will include the development of Key Performance Indicators and service standards where appropriate.

We look forward to ongoing engagement with the Assistant Minister and stakeholders, working collaboratively to achieve these objectives for the Office of Drug Control and to drive continuous improvement in regulatory outcomes for all Australians.



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6 March 2026