

Prescribing off-label, unapproved and compounded medicines: new Ahpra guidance for practitioners

Reading time:

Eleanor Milne

Date created: 10/10/2026

Author: Dr Owen Bradfield, MIPS Chief Medical Officer

Since Queensland became the first state to relax ADHD prescribing rules for GPs in December 2025, most other jurisdictions have followed with their own legislative and regulatory reforms. If you prescribe Schedule 8 psychostimulants for ADHD, or are considering starting this, the rules in your state may have changed since you last checked.

What's changed

New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, the ACT and Victoria have all introduced pathways allowing GPs who complete additional training to diagnose ADHD and/or continue or initiate psychostimulant prescribing with reduced specialist involvement. Western Australia permits GPs to continue, but not initiate, prescribing under a shared care model. The Northern Territory has not proposed changes, and remains the most restrictive jurisdiction alongside Victoria's current settings. Requirements also differ depending on whether you're prescribing for a new patient, continuing treatment a specialist started, or working across a state border, so a rule that applies in your home jurisdiction may not apply to a patient located elsewhere.

What doesn't change

Whatever your state permits, three things stay constant:

- The standard of care. Civil liability law across Australia holds GPs to the standard of a reasonable professional peer, regardless of how relaxed the prescribing pathway is.
- PBS Authority Required rules. State-level prescribing reform doesn't change Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme criteria. Dose, duration and age-of-diagnosis restrictions still apply if you want the medication subsidised.
- Documentation obligations. Diagnostic reasoning, informed consent discussions (including risks such as cardiovascular effects and dependency), and monitoring plans should be recorded regardless of how much autonomy your jurisdiction gives you.

Before you prescribe

- Confirm your jurisdiction's current requirements. This is a fast-moving area and guidance issued even a few months ago may be superseded.
- Check whether you need to register with, or check, your state's real-time prescription monitoring database. Requirements range from voluntary to mandatory depending on where you practise.
- Confirm whether you are required to apply for an authority or permit in your jurisdiction, even if you are now permitted to initiate medication.
- If prescribing via telehealth, consider whether the consultation genuinely allows you to verify the patient's identity and assess prescribing risk, in accordance with the Medical Board of Australia's telehealth guidelines.
- If a patient is located in a different state to you, check whether their jurisdiction's requirements apply in addition to your own.

References

Bradfield O, Fernando D. Balancing care with compliance: Medicolegal issues for general practitioners treating attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. *Australian Journal of General Practice* 2026;55(9):595-601.

Medical Board of Australia, Ahpra. Guidelines: Telehealth consultations with patients. Ahpra, 2025.

Medical Indemnity Protection Society ABN 64 007 067 281 | AFSL 301912

All information on this page is of a general nature only and is not intended to be relied upon as, nor to be a substitute for, specific legal or other professional advice. No responsibility for the loss occasioned to any person acting on or refraining from action as a result of any material published can or will be accepted by MIPS.

You should seek legal or other professional advice before relying on any content, and practise proper clinical decision making with regard to the individual circumstances.

Information is only current at the date initially published.

If in doubt, contact our claims and 24-hour medico-legal advice and support team on 1300 698 573.

You should consider the appropriateness of the information and read the [Member Handbook Combined PDS and FSG](#) before making a decision on whether to join MIPS.
