**Pharmaceutical Services Branch**

**SECTION 59E OF THE POISONS ACT 1971 Regulation 19 of the Poisons Regulations 2008**

**Terms of Reference of the Psychostimulants Advisory Committee (PAC)**



**Overview**

The prescribing of the narcotic psychostimulants, methylphenidate and dexamphetamine, is regulated under the Tasmanian *Poisons Act 1971* (the “Act”) and the *Poisons Regulations 2008*. The regulation through the Act recognises the medical utility of these substances in the treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and narcolepsy but also their propensity for causing dependence and the risk of diversion.

The Act requires a medical practitioner to obtain an authority from the Secretary of the Department before the commencement of the prescribing of these substances. Pharmaceutical Services Branch is responsible for granting authorities to medical practitioners to prescribe and the pharmacists within the Branch are delegates of the Secretary for this purpose.

Tasmanian guidelines, supported by the relevant specialist colleges, have been developed for the prescribing of these substances in both adults and children. Copies of these guidelines can be found at [www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/psbtas](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/psbtas) . These documents draw extensively on similar documents in other jurisdictions such as the NSW Health Departments documents “Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in Adults: Criteria for Issue of Authority under The Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 to Prescribe Dexamphetamine or Methylphenidate” (TG190/3).

It is considered appropriate that the delegates have access to medical advice on a case-by-case basis when granting authorities. The Psychostimulants Advisory Committee (PAC) provides a suitable structure for review and recommendations for applications in relation to complex cases and those that do not meet the endorsed guidelines.

**Role and function**

The Psychostimulants Advisory Committee shall:

1. Consider authority applications and relevant information pertaining to complex cases involving treatment with the narcotic psychostimulants.
2. Give advice to the delegate in relation to a particular application.

Advice shall be consistent with the principles of the “Quality Use of Medicines”, which is that the regulated substances are to be used safely, judiciously, appropriately and efficaciously (The *National Medicines Policy 2000*) and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) Revised Practice Guideline #6: *Guidelines for the use of Dexamphetamine and Methylphenidate in adults.*

**Referral of particular applications to the Expert Advisory Panel**

This document should be read in conjunction with:

* *Tasmanian Guidelines : Prescribing of Psychostimulants (Dexamphetamine and Methylphenidate) in Adults (2008)*
* *Tasmanian Guidelines: Prescribing of Psychostimulants - Children and Adults (2008)*
* *Clinical Practice Points on the Diagnosis, Assessment and management of ADHD in Children and Adolescents (NHMRC 2012)*

Usually applications of high risk or complexity are referred to the PAC for advice. Risk is identified as a function of age, drug, dose, indication or aberrant behaviours.

*The PAC could typically expect to review an exceptional application where:*

* *Treatment is for a condition other than ADHD or narcolepsy*
* *There is a history of substance misuse or dependency, including past or present treatment for dependency*
* *Patients are outside the age criteria*
* *Doses are in excess of the specified maximums that are nationally recommended.*
* *the DSM-IV criteria for ADHD are not fulfilled*
* *patients experience significant side effects*
* *there is severe psychiatric co-morbidity*
* *a patient has a severe tic causing significant impairment and distress or it requires treatment in its own right*
* *authorisation is requested for excessive daytime sleepiness without a positive sleep study*

**Membership**

* Two medical practitioners with specialist qualifications in psychiatry with one member endorsed by the RANZCP.
* A medical practitioner with specialist qualifications and/or experience in the treatment of drug dependence.
* Other medical advisers may be co-opted as required.

**Chair**

One of the members of the panel will act as the chair for any particular case.

**Quorum**

Two members and where the advice relates to drug dependence one member to have experience in the treatment of drug dependence.

**Review**

A medical practitioner can request a review of the terms of an authority issued to them and the grounds for such a request are not limited. The request may be clinical in nature or relate to other facts relevant to the application.

A patient or their carer may request a review in respect of the authority issued to their medical practitioner for treatment of the patient.

Copies of the forms for such a request are available on the website [www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/psbtas](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/psbtas)