

## Wither *Australian Prescriber*?

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*Australian Prescriber* was first published by the Department of Health in 1975.<sup>1</sup> In 2002, the Department of Health outsourced the publication to the National Prescribing Service,<sup>2</sup> now known as NPS MedicineWise. Following recent changes to its funding, NPS MedicineWise will cease all operations by 31 December 2022. This creates some uncertainty about the future of *Australian Prescriber*.

The need for an independent journal of therapeutics was reaffirmed in the first Policy on the Quality Use of Medicines in 1992.<sup>3</sup> In turn, that policy became part of the National Medicines Policy.<sup>4</sup> It is therefore important to sustain the publication of independent information about medicines.

*Australian Prescriber* has fared well in the reviews of NPS MedicineWise.<sup>5,6</sup> The recent rapid review of the budget decision affecting NPS MedicineWise reported a need '...to allocate outstanding NPS MedicineWise functions, most notably ongoing preparation and publication of *Australian Prescriber*'.<sup>6</sup> Around the time of this review, over 30 specialist colleges and societies

expressed support for *Australian Prescriber* and more than 8000 health professionals signed an open letter to the Minister of Health and Aged Care in favour of the journal.

There is clearly much goodwill for *Australian Prescriber* to continue but, at the time of writing, the outlook is unclear. At present, the plan is for the Department of Health and Aged Care to find a new publisher for *Australian Prescriber* through a competitive tendering process.

Currently, it is unknown who the new publisher will be and when it will take over. Sadly, it is known that the entire editorial team will be made redundant, along with all the other employees of NPS MedicineWise, before Christmas. However, the team and the independent Editorial Executive Committee have already prepared articles for publication in 2023. It is therefore hoped that any interruption to the publication of *Australian Prescriber* will be brief.

To be continued... ◀

### REFERENCES

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