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| **Approval in Principle (AIP)  – New establishment guidelines** |
| Health service establishments  OFFICIAL  OFFICIAL |

## When must an application be made?

To construct premises proposed to be used as either a private hospital or day procedure centre, an application must be made to the Department of Health (the department) for an AIP.

It is an offence under section 115 of the *Health Services Act 1988* (the Act) for work to commence before an AIP has been granted and the Secretary to the Department of Health (the Secretary) (or Delegate) has issued a Certificate of AIP.

An AIP is the first stage in the process for registration of a new private hospital or day procedure centre. The second stage is to apply for registration of the facility. A facility must not commence operation until it is registered.

Prior to applying for AIP, it is recommended that you contact the Private Hospitals and Day Procedure Centres Unit at [privatehospitals@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:privatehospitals@health.vic.gov.au) to make a time to discuss the project.

## What is assessed when an application for AIP is made?

The assessment of an AIP application is made in accordance with the criteria detailed in section 71 of the Act. These criteria include:

* financial capacity of the proposed proprietor.
* fitness and propriety of the proposed proprietor.
* suitability of the design having regard to the type of facility.
* suitability of the location of the land or premises having regard to availability of other community services and the safety and amenity of the environment; and
* security of tenure.

## How to complete an AIP application

### 1. Schedule 2 form and prescribed fee

* Once the Department has received the completed Schedule 2 application form an invoice can be requested for the prescribed fee. Applications forms can be found at <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/private-health-service-establishments/forms-checklists-and-guidelines-for-private-health-service>. **All payments must be made electronically** (refer to Private Hospitals – fees <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/private-health-service-establishments/fees-for-private-health-service-establishments> for the current prescribed fee);
* The department also requests other information and documents to assess an AIP application in accordance with the mandatory criteria detailed in section 71 of the Act.

### 2. Written description of the services and business plan

Provide a business plan that outlines the need for the health service establishment in the proposed location. The business plan should include:

* Details of all clinical specialities including the type and level of clinical service (i.e., acuity) to be provided.
* The proposed model of care for these clinical specialities.
* Any demographic research you may have done on the current availability of these services in the catchment area.

Applicants must complete the Registration Bed Numbers form (available for download from <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/private-health-service-establishments/forms-checklists-and-guidelines-for-private-health-service>).The AIP process only applies to premises that will be used for private hospitals and day procedure centres. The department therefore needs to consider whether the proposed facility falls within the scope of the Act.

### 3. Suitability of the design having regard to the type of facility

The suitability of the design of the facility will be assessed against the *Health Services (Health Service Establishments) Regulations 2013* (the Regulations) with particular reference to the Australasian Health Facilities Guidelines (AusHFG).

In July 2018, the regulations were revised to include mandatory compliance with the AusHFG.

All new building proposals are assessed for compliance by a member of a panel of architects appointed by the department. The architectural assessment takes approximately ten working days and proprietors are notified in writing of any variances from the regulations and the AusHFG which may require alterations to the drawings prior to the AIP application progressing to the delegate for review.

Applicants must submit:

* A copy of schematic design floor plan, drawn to a scale of 1:100 showing; the floor area of each room, name of each room and equipment, fittings, and furnishings.
* A copy of site plans drawn to a scale of 1:200 or 1:500. Please show the ambulance bay on the site plan.
* NOTE - If the development includes an operating suite or procedure rooms, provide detail of the ‘clean’ and ‘dirty’ instrument flow, and staff and patient access to/from the clinical zone.
* Proposed floor finishes at 1:100 scale.
* Proposed detailed fit out plan at 1: 50 scale for major rooms (applicants can use generic Room Layout Sheets from the AusHFG).

Departures from the AusHFG, including fixtures and fittings, are to be noted on the Schedule of Accommodation. Designs that depart from the AusHFG will not be approved unless clear patient and/or service benefits are justified.

### 4. Schedule of Accommodation

The Schedule of Accommodation lists the type, number and size of rooms and spaces required in the health service establishment. Please refer to the AusHFG and list all rooms as recommended for the type of clinical services being provided and include the total floor area of each proposed room.

Any designs that depart from the AusHFG will not be approved unless clear patient/and or service benefits can be demonstrated and justified. (Available for download from <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/private-health-service-establishments/forms-checklists-and-guidelines-for-private-health-service>).

It is an offence under section 151 of the Act to provide false or misleading information for the purposes of complying with this Act.

## What happens after an application is made?

### Maximum time frame for processing applications

The Secretary (or Delegate) has 60 days after receiving an application (comprising the scheduled form and prescribed fee) to inform the applicant of a decision. If the Secretary (or Delegate) requests the applicant to provide additional information, a decision must be made within 28 days of receipt of the information last requested or within the 60-day period, whichever is later. Applicants should keep these timeframes in mind when applying for assessment.

NOTE: The department will endeavour to decide on complete AIP applications within 30 days.

### Certificate of AIP granted

After considering the application the Secretary (or Delegate) may grant the application and issue a Certificate of AIP. The AIP may be granted with conditions.

### Site visit following construction of the private hospital or day procedure centre

The applicant should contact the Department two to four weeks prior to the completion of construction to arrange a site visit. The Occupancy Permit must be received by the department prior to the site visit taking place.

At this visit all relevant certification of compliance with all relevant statutory authority and standards requirements must be submitted.

NOTE: If the Certificate of Occupancy is not provided to the department, the scheduled site visit will not take place and a new appointment will have to be made.

You may also request a pre-AIP Inspection to review progress of works and identify any regulatory issues prior to arranging the more formal final site visit once construction has been completed. The Architect Panel’s time for pre-AIP Inspections is charged to the facility. The final AIP site (one only) visit is paid for by the department.

At both visits, the Unit will inspect the premises to ensure compliance with the AusHFG and the Regulations. At the final AIP inspection any works, that do not comply with the AusHFG or the Regulations, may be required to be made compliant prior to registration of the facility.

Please complete the AIP Site Inspection Checklist which provides a list of compliance certificates that may be required. This document can be downloaded from the <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/private-health-service-establishments/forms-checklists-and-guidelines-for-private-health-service>.

### What if the plans change during construction or another person wants to take over?

Construction must be conducted in accordance with the Certificate of AIP and the planning permit. Should it become necessary to deviate from the approved plans or transfer the Certificate to another person, an application for variation of AIP must be submitted. Please refer to the relevant variation of AIP guidelines on our website.

**Please send the signed and completed form by email to the** [Private Hospitals](mailto:privatehospitals@dhhs.vic.gov.au) & Day Procedure Centres Unit: [privatehospitals@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:privatehospitals@health.vic.gov.au)

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