

# Establishing a New General Practice

When you are establishing a new general practice, there are many different aspects to keep in mind. To help you streamline the process, below are the key areas that require careful consideration.

## Develop a business plan

The first step towards establishing a successful general practice is developing a business plan.

During the planning process, take the time to research, analyse and evaluate every aspect of the new practice including the:

- business name, location, structure and services
- vision, goals and objectives
- target market and marketing strategy
- competing practices in the area
- external professional advisers
- risk analysis and management
- financial requirements and objectives.

## Find the right location

After you have developed the new practice's business plan, it is time to narrow down the location to specific suburbs and search for suitable premises.

While considering potential locations, think about the new practice's immediate and future requirements while taking into account the:

- benefits of purchasing or leasing
- visibility of the building and passing foot traffic
- proximity to main roads and public transport
- availability of parking for patients and staff
- nearby complementary/competing health services
- time frame for council approval and fit out
- disability access and security of the building
- space for reception area, waiting room, consulting rooms, nursing station and treatment room.

## Policies and procedures

To enhance the day-to-day operation of the new practice, avoid potential liabilities and adhere to the professional/legislative requirements, it is critical to have policies and procedures in place that include:

- accreditation against the RACGP standards
- codes of practice and compliance
- management of personal health records

- business interruption and emergencies
- management of results, follow ups and recalls
- confidentiality, privacy and intellectual property
- destruction and/or archiving of medical records
- occupational health and safety
- sterilisation and infection control
- vaccination and drug management.

## Equipment and supplies

When you are working out the budget for establishing the new practice, don't forget to allocate funds for essential equipment and supplies such as:

- clinical equipment
- medical supplies
- emergency equipment
- office equipment, furniture and supplies
- kitchen appliances and utensils.

## IT network and system

Establishing a new practice is the perfect time to implement a purpose-built, user-friendly IT network and practice management system.

Speak to your IT support provider about the specific requirements for the practice's:

- IT network, system and equipment
- computer software and hardware
- telephone systems
- onsite and offsite data backups
- telehealth and e-health
- website development and maintenance
- cybersecurity and malware protection.

## Clinical and non-clinical staff

After you have decided which services the new practice will deliver, you can work out the number of clinical and non-clinical staff you will need to employ while developing the necessary documentation for:

- contracts and agreements
- position descriptions
- performance management and annual reviews
- superannuation
- taxation
- inductions and training
- clinical supervision (if required).

### Ongoing requirements

To ensure the new practice can successfully manage risks and opportunities as they arise, there are a number of ongoing requirements to consider including:

- business, building and contents insurance
- public liability insurance
- medical indemnity insurance
- workers' compensation insurance
- medical board registrations
- accreditation for accessing government funding
- criminal record screenings
- Working with Children Checks.

### Resources and helpful links

- Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited (AGPAL) – [agpal.com.au](http://agpal.com.au)
- Australian Association of Practice Management (AAPM) – [aapm.org.au](http://aapm.org.au)
- Quality Practice Accreditation – [gpa.net.au](http://gpa.net.au)
- The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) – [racgp.com.au](http://racgp.com.au)
- Australian Digital Health Agency – [digitalhealth.gov.au](http://digitalhealth.gov.au)
- Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority (AHPRA) – [ahpra.gov.au](http://ahpra.gov.au)
- Australian Medical Association – [ama.com.au](http://ama.com.au)
- Australian Medical Council – [amc.org.au](http://amc.org.au)
- Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association – [apna.asn.au](http://apna.asn.au)
- Doctor Connect – [doctorconnect.gov.au](http://doctorconnect.gov.au)
- Medicare Australia – [servicesaustralia.gov.au](http://servicesaustralia.gov.au)
- Australian Taxation Office – [ato.gov.au](http://ato.gov.au)
- Business Enterprise Centre – [becaustralia.org.au](http://becaustralia.org.au)
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry – [cciwa.com](http://cciwa.com)
- Small Business Development Corporation – [smallbusiness.wa.gov.au](http://smallbusiness.wa.gov.au)
- Fair Work Ombudsman – [fairwork.gov.au](http://fairwork.gov.au)
- WorkSafe – [commerce.wa.gov.au/WorkSafe](http://commerce.wa.gov.au/WorkSafe)
- WA Primary Health Alliance – [wapha.org.au](http://wapha.org.au)
- Rural Health West – [ruralhealthwest.com.au](http://ruralhealthwest.com.au)

*Whilst all care has been taken in preparing this document, this information is a guide only and subject to change without notice.*