

Media release

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Now is the time for Hospital Pharmacist-led action for a safer medicines future

With the Federal Election confirmed for Saturday 21 May, the Society of Hospital Pharmacists Australia (SHPA) has called on the major parties to agree in-principle to important reforms to support patients by enhancing medication safety, provide more equitable access to medicines and plan for the workforce needed to underpin Australia's future health and wellbeing.

SHPA's [2022 Federal Election policy priorities](#) aim to assist the Government and the Federal Labor Party in empowering the Hospital Pharmacy sector – who deliver over \$3 billion worth of PBS medicines to patients each year – to improve equity of access to medicines and pharmacists' services for all Australians, in particular, the most vulnerable populations requiring hospital care and indigenous Australians.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says while medicines safety enjoys bipartisan support, now is the time for meaningful action and solutions led by expert Hospital Pharmacists.

'Australians are rightfully proud of our healthcare system, with access to vital medicines and treatments through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Schedule (PBS) and Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) lauded globally.

'However too many patients in our community continue to fall through the cracks, not receiving medicines when they need it the most, or not having a pharmacist available to give them the advice they need to safely take their medicines. It is crucial our healthcare system works for all of us, and that its ongoing sustainability is ensured through evidence-based policies and practice.'

The peak body representing Australia's Hospital Pharmacists has highlighted three top priorities for the sector:

1. Continue and enhance support for timely, quality, equitable and safe patient access to PBS medicines in hospital settings through improved Pharmaceutical Reform Agreements.
2. Reduce longstanding inequity in medicines access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients receiving PBS medicines from hospitals.
3. Commission a ten-year National Pharmacy Workforce Plan to support pharmacy workforce sustainability.

Ms Michaels reiterated SHPA's support for timely, quality and safe access to PBS medicines and pharmacy services for the Australian community.

'Over the next term of Parliament, SHPA is committed to working with federal government ministers, shadow ministers and backbenchers to enhance the PBS through the expertise of Hospital Pharmacists, who manage 24% of its annual expenditure.

'SHPA is keen to see work continue on fast-tracking approval of life-saving medicines by the Therapeutic Goods Administration, and we will continue to work with the Department of Health on the National Health Reform Agreement and other important funding mechanisms.

'This election will highlight the importance of continued stability across health care, especially in key sectors such as hospitals, and SHPA is keen to see that reflected in funding across pharmacy settings.'

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional, for-purpose organisation for leading pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working across Australia's health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. Embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams and equipped with exceptional medicines management expertise, SHPA members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

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