



The Network of Pharmacies

– Delivering for the Community



While there is much criticism regarding the access to health services in Australia, Community Pharmacy is proud of its strong record of patient access to pharmacy services no matter where you live in our vast nation. This access is facilitated by pharmacy location rules which determine where pharmacy services are located. These Location Rules, are underpinned by the Community Pharmacy Agreements, and the objectives are to ensure:

- all Australians have access to PBS medicines;
- there is a commercially viable and sustainable network of community pharmacies dispensing PBS medicines;
- improved efficiency through increased competition between pharmacies;
- improved flexibility to respond to the community need for pharmacy services;
- increased local access to community pharmacies for persons in rural and remote regions of Australia; and
- the continued development of an effective, efficient and well-distributed community pharmacy network in Australia.

These objectives have been more than achieved.

Community Pharmacy delivers the most accessible of all health professionals via a 5,000 fold network throughout urban, regional and rural Australia.

On average each person in Australia visits a community pharmacy 14 times per year. Community pharmacy is therefore ideally positioned to make a valuable contribution to the Government's vision of Australia becoming the healthiest country by 2020.

The Community Pharmacy network is the only health professional network that has grown in rural and regional Australia over the past decade.

Community Pharmacy delivers equitable access to life saving medicines and other primary health care services to all Australians, no matter where they live. For example it means a pensioner pays the same price for their medicine no matter which pharmacy they visit.

This has been further enhanced by the introduction of the wholesaling Community Service Obligation which ensures

that every pharmacy in Australia can obtain any PBS medicine from their wholesaler within 24 hours, no matter where they are located. There are over 2700 items on the PBS and Australians have the right to have access to all their medicines.

The established community pharmacy network provides a cost-effective platform for program implementation which will assist the Government in minimising total costs associated with a national primary health care strategy.

At a time when Australia is facing a dire shortage of doctors and other health care professionals, and with varying out of pocket costs, community pharmacy is the only health professional network where patients can easily access the advice of university trained health professionals at no charge and with no appointment, and have affordable access to life saving medicines on the PBS.

