

Introduction

The Guild is an employers' organisation servicing the needs of community pharmacists. Its members are pharmacist owners of the approximately 5000 pharmacies throughout Australia. The Guild strives to promote, maintain and support community pharmacies in delivering quality health outcomes to all Australians.

Federal and State governments in Australia face major challenges in delivering accessible, equitable, and cost-effective health care to their respective populations. While these challenges are similar to those faced by governments around the world, the Commonwealth Government is challenging traditional approaches to health care. In the process, it is creating opportunities for a fresh look at the delivery systems of health services, the roles of the health professionals who provide them and at models for collaboration between these professionals and the institutions in which they operate. Pharmacy can play an important role in these changes.

Community pharmacies provide an accessible, safe, efficient, nationwide, professional, primary health care service to all Australians based on quality advice and service through health care professionals. As primary health care providers pharmacists are involved in health promotion, early intervention, prevention, assessment and general management of health. They are often the first point of contact between the public and the health care system. The Guild believes the network of community pharmacies across Australia is an under-utilised resource. This paper indicates practical ways in which it might be better utilised.

This Roadmap has been so called because it takes a 'how to' approach to the problems it addresses. The Roadmap is a practical working document designed to achieve real change in how community pharmacies operate. It will assist governments in addressing some of their health care challenges in ways that do not always involve government outlays.

Pharmacists have many possible career paths – community pharmacy, hospital pharmacy, consultancy and industry - in both research and marketing areas. The Roadmap specifically focuses on the way forward for community pharmacy.

The first part of the Roadmap provides an account of where community pharmacy has been and how it has evolved. It includes examples of

innovations that demonstrate the capacity of the pharmacy profession not only to deliver monetary efficiencies to the health care system (by reducing the Medicare burden) but also to provide a suite of professional and preventative health services that assist in keeping Australians healthy across their lifespan. This part provides a brief overview of recent major policy developments, particularly as they impact on community pharmacy.

The second part entitled 'The Roadmap - Pharmacy Solutions for the Future', presents our vision for existing and potential future pharmacy services within a matrix comprising four quadrants, representing the physical location from which the service is delivered. It identifies opportunities, through adapting business models, to expand the already wide range of professional services currently offered - some of these can be expanded into systematised national programs.

The third part of the Roadmap examines the challenges for implementation, including how to prepare and utilise the growing pharmacist workforce and different funding options. Importantly this section sets out the practical framework of 'The Roadmap Program Development Template', which will be used as the basis for developing details for each program/service.

This is followed by the Glossary and Appendix , which include a list of proposed services and an explanation of the Roadmap as a living document. 'The Roadmap Program Development Template' has been completed for four selected services, including one existing service and a new service under the Fifth Agreement.

The Roadmap will be of value to anyone with a general interest in health care in Australia and especially useful for community pharmacists, aspiring pharmacy owners, pharmacy students, health planners, government officials, consumers and academics undertaking research in pharmacy or related fields.