



15 May 2019

Dr Chris Freeman FPS  
National President  
Pharmaceutical Society of Australia  
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Dear Dr Freeman

Thank you for your letter on the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's policy priorities for the upcoming federal election. We appreciate the opportunity to reiterate Labor's strong support for Australia's 31,000 pharmacists and their vital role in our health care system.

Labor values the important role that pharmacists play in the supply of medicines and in the health of all Australians. This is reflected in our National Platform – our most important policy document – which now recognises that “the National Medicines Policy and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme are underpinned by the community pharmacy network and pharmacists, who are medicines experts”.

It's also why we are proud to have a pharmacist in our parliamentary Caucus. Labor will continue to draw on the experience and expertise of the Member for Dobell, Emma McBride, as we consider issues affecting your profession.

If elected, Labor would be happy to engage with the PSA on the issue of embedding pharmacists within healthcare teams, particularly in residential aged care facilities, in more detail.

We have already announced that a Shorten Labor Government will establish a permanent Australian Health Reform Commission, and that one of its first priorities will be primary care reform. We look forward to working with you on this important task.

Only Labor will be in a position to improve aged care and adequately respond to the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. Labor will work with the sector to improve aged care and respond to the Royal Commission's recommendations once they are handed down. To further improve the quality of care and support a future aged care workforce, we have made a number of commitments, including:

- Immediately speeding up implementation of the Matter of Care workforce strategy.
- Publishing the skill mix of the workforce employed at every residential aged care facility to ensure the appropriate skills-mix of properly trained staff is present at all times.

The next Community Pharmacy Agreement will need to consider the role of pharmacists and community pharmacies in primary health care reform. Labor agrees that pharmacists should work to their full scope of practice, without fragmenting care or duplicating services.

Again, this belief is reflected in our National Platform, which recognises that “primary care innovation should include better utilisation of [the pharmacy] infrastructure and workforce”, and commits a Labor Government to “encouraging opportunities and funding systems [for] GPs, community pharmacies and other primary care providers to collaborate”.

A Shorten Labor Government will honour the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement and lead early and inclusive negotiations, giving PSA a seat at the table, towards the next agreement.

Thank you again for the opportunity to reiterate our support for Australia’s 31,000 pharmacists. We have been grateful for our close relationship with pharmacists and The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia in Opposition, and hope to continue that relationship as Prime Minister and Health Minister after this election.

Yours sincerely

Australian Labor Campaign

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