

# PHARMACIST REMUNERATION

Securing our pharmacist workforce for the future



## NATIONAL ADVOCACY DAY OF ACTION ADVOCACY KIT

**Ahead of this year's Federal Election, PSA is focused on improving pharmacist remuneration by calling on political parties and independents to address these unfair and inequitable pay discrepancies for pharmacists.**



To kick-start this campaign, **PSA is holding a National Advocacy Day of Action on Thursday 17th March 2022. This is your opportunity to have your voice heard on matters of critical importance to the profession.** The purpose of this occasion is to generate public awareness of the workload, remuneration, and conditions which pharmacists have been experiencing throughout the pandemic, and for you to raise these issues directly with your local member of parliament.

For this to be a success, we need each and every one of you to contribute, to demonstrate just how important these issues are, how passionate you are about the local communities you serve, and why change is needed.

**Your voice matters! PSA is here to give you the microphone – along with the tools you need to be heard.**



**Over the course of the pandemic, the swift pivot towards telehealth by a large proportion of primary health providers has put significant strain on Australian pharmacists.** As Australia's most accessible healthcare destination, pharmacies have remained open throughout this period – ensuring that patients can continue to access essential medicines, non-urgent care, and other services such as vaccinations.

**This has put Australia's pharmacists under immense pressure – with huge challenges including:**

- Administering vaccinations
- Rapid Antigen Test shortages
- Medicine supply shortages
- Workforce shortages due to isolation requirements
- Increasing incidence of violent and abusive behaviour from patients



Adding insult to injury is the fact that pharmacists are so often paid less than other healthcare providers, for providing the exact same services – and sometimes they're not even paid at all.



If these increasingly challenging conditions are not addressed soon, the development and retention of pharmacists is in jeopardy. People who entered pharmacy with admirable intentions, to selflessly help and care for others, are reaching a crossroad in their careers – exacerbated by these increasingly difficult working conditions. **These factors all contribute to pharmacists feeling unsupported and left behind, causing them to leave the profession.**

The **average wage** for early career pharmacists (those with less than 10 years' experience) is **\$66,955 (\$32.77 per hour)**, making them one of Australia's lowest remunerated, tertiary educated health professions.



### Average pharmacist salaries in contrast with:

Health Sector		Other Countries		Other Professions	
General Practitioner	\$224,134	United States	\$170,514	HR Manager	\$114,636
Nurse Practitioner	\$125,258	Canada	\$113,335	Project Manager	\$112,474
Dentist	\$124,475	United Kingdom	\$88,437	Teacher	\$90,744
Optometrist	\$111,048	New Zealand	\$87,443	Electrician	\$86,970
Psychologist	\$90,698	Australia	\$80,943	Web Developer	\$85,860
Speech Pathologist	\$82,861			Pharmacists	\$80,943
Pharmacist	\$80,943				

Average base salary comparisons from [au.indeed.com](https://au.indeed.com) as at January 2022



**Pharmacists are often paid less than other healthcare providers for providing the exact same services.** An example is in **Multidisciplinary Case Conferencing**, where General Practitioners coordinate a team of allied health, home and community service providers to ensure their patient's care needs are being met.

Despite playing a key role in medicine safety, **pharmacists remain the *only* allied health provider who are *not* remunerated for their participation in case conferences.** Ensuring pharmacists' eligibility for case conferencing payments is crucial to connecting GPs, pharmacists and the broader multidisciplinary team.

The current **COVID-19 vaccination program** is another example of **pharmacists being paid less for the same service**:



	Pharmacists	GPs
First Dose	\$16	\$31.05
Second dose	\$26	\$34.45
Booster	\$26	\$34.45

GPs may also be able to claim a suitability assessment fee (\$39.10) for a total of **\$73.55**.

If all three doses are provided by the same practitioner in a major city, a **pharmacist would receive \$68, whilst a GP would receive \$139.05**.



**\$156  
MILLION**

Pharmacists have administered approximately 17% of all Commonwealth-administered COVID-19 vaccines. **By paying pharmacists substantially less than their GP counterparts, the government has shortchanged pharmacists by more than \$156 million.**

## Securing our pharmacist workforce for the future

**Pharmacists deserve the same pay as other healthcare providers for doing the same work.** PSA calls on the incoming government to address the unfair and inequitable pay disparities between pharmacists and other healthcare providers by:

1. Introducing a MBS rebate for pharmacists to be remunerated for multidisciplinary case conferences.
2. Introducing a MBS service payment to pharmacists for administering National Immunisation Program (NIP) vaccinations, including COVID-19 vaccines.

PSA also calls on the incoming government to commit to a binding agreement with PSA to **improve pharmacist wages and working conditions in recognition of their critical responsibilities, advanced training and skills.** The agreement would improve consumer health outcomes through the provision of safe and effective medication use and underpin future Community Pharmacy Agreements to ensure sustainability of the pharmacist workforce.

# Help Us Spread the Message

We are seeking your support in promoting our remuneration campaign. Politicians need to hear from you directly – to hear your personal stories and experiences. Here is how you can get involved!



## Contact Your Local Politician

PSA's **Advocacy Action Centre** website will connect you directly with your local Member of Parliament, allowing you to tell your stories and state the case for improved pharmacist remuneration.

Once you enter your **name, email, phone, address** and **postcode**, contact details for your local Member of Parliament will load along with an email template. You can either send this template as is, or you can edit it to include your own stories and experiences.

Once you hit “submit”, the email will be sent to your Member of Parliament. The PSA Advocacy team will also receive a copy of your email.

**The Advocacy Action Centre will then give you the option to:**

- Phone your member's electorate office, with a suggested script provided to guide you;
- Post to your member's Facebook page or tag them in a Tweet;
- Record a video message for PSA to distribute to politicians on social media.



## Speak Out on Social Media

Use the social media graphics provided on PSA's **Advocacy Action Centre** website across your own personal social media platforms.

Tag your Member of Parliament and any other local candidates in your posts. Do your research before hand – familiarise yourself with your candidates and follow and connect with their pages.

Keep your post relevant, concise and to the point, but also use the opportunity to share your stories and experiences. Be emotive and talk about the real impact these issues are having on you and your staff.

**Tip:** Consider adding “**Pharmacist**” or your job title to your name or blurb.



# Engage Your Local Candidates

In addition to contacting your local member through PSA's **Advocacy Action Centre**, the lead up to this year's Federal Election is a great time to engage and build relationships with your local candidates.

## Top Tips for Engaging with Politicians

### Getting a Meeting

- Sign up for their newsletter, visit their website, and follow their social media to stay up to date on the issues they care about and their activities across the electorate.
- Look for opportunities to meet and engage with your local candidates at community events.
- Invite them to visit your place of work to learn more about what you do, your issues and experiences.
- Use a milestone to organise an event that you can invite them to attend (such as 10,000 vaccinations administered).

### Preparing for the Meeting

- Prepare to introduce yourself in one sentence – your elevator pitch!
- Familiarise yourself with the other candidates, the suburbs covered by the electorate, and the margin of the seat.
- Find out what portfolios the MP has, or what committees they sit on.
- Think about your issue in terms of why they should care, and what problem it is that you are solving for them.

### Being Memorable

- Look for common interests as a way to connect.
- Focus on the issue and the personal story you have to tell.
- Facts and figures are important, but personal stories will make you more memorable.
- Keep the conversation concise, relevant and to the point.

### Following-Up

- Following up after your meeting is crucial for you to continue building longer term relationships.
- Write a thank you letter, with an offer to meet again in the future.
- Provide any additional helpful information or media stories, or ask for advice on how to achieve the outcome you are after.
- Approach every interaction as an opportunity to build the relationship.

Let PSA know how you go by getting in contact with the Advocacy Team at [advocacy@psa.org.au](mailto:advocacy@psa.org.au). Please reach out if you have any questions or require further support.