

Friday 24 February 2017 **For immediate release**

From pilot to practice: Advancing Australian pharmacy workforce confirmed as priority

A gathering of leading minds across pharmacy advocacy and practice have reaffirmed the urgent need for a robust, sustainable, independent process to transform Australia's pharmacy workforce following an Advanced Practice Think Tank in Melbourne on Monday.

The one-day roundtable, which comprised representatives from Australian pharmacy bodies, universities and leading international advanced practice groups, reiterated a collective commitment to developing a central operational mechanism to advance the national pharmacy workforce, in turn strengthening medicines management and delivering optimal health outcomes to Australians.

Associate Professor Ian Coombes, who chaired the Think Tank, says establishing an operational entity to credential advanced practice pharmacists and endorse accrediting organisations will be informed by local and international experience and expertise.

'It was heartening the Think Tank confirmed the establishment of a sustainable credentialing process should not be delayed, should explore closer ties with international partners and should implement principles previously outlined and formally tested by the Australian Pharmaceutical Council (APC) in their recent pilot.'

Professor Ian Bates, Director for Education Development for the International Pharmaceutical Federation adds: 'As in all areas of healthcare, future service delivery requires a transformative approach to workforce development – in this context, standing still means going backwards.'

The pilot advanced practice model developed by the APC stipulates that an authorised and accountable program for universally available, life-long development should be rigorously maintained and delivered by people proficient in advanced pharmacy practice.

Professor Michael Dooley, President of the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) says the Think Tank's consensus and enthusiasm was encouraging.

'Gathering such broad expertise in one room really crystallised the importance of strengthening and recognising advanced pharmacy practice in Australia and it was reassuring to have clear and consistent agreement that establishing a governance mechanism is a priority in 2017.'

'SHPA remains committed to working with pharmacy partners to realise advanced practice in Australia, complementing our other advanced offerings such as advanced residencies, standards of practice and continuing professional development (CPD).'

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national professional organisation for more than 4,000 pharmacists, pharmacists in training, pharmacy technicians and associates working across Australia's health system. SHPA is the only professional pharmacy organisation with a core base of members practising in public and private hospitals and other health service facilities.

SHPA is committed to facilitating the safe and effective use of medicines, which is the core responsibility of pharmacists, especially in hospitals. SHPA supports pharmacists to meet medication and related service needs, so that both optimal health outcomes and economic objectives are achieved for Australians, as individuals, for the community as a whole and for healthcare facilities within our systems of healthcare.

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia |