



The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia

SUBMISSION

2025 Core Skills Occupation List (CSOL) Consultation

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia's response to consultations to inform Jobs and Skills
Australia's Advice to Government on the 2025 CSOL.

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ABOUT THE GUILD

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia ('The Guild') is the national employer industry association representing owners of community pharmacies – which are small and medium businesses in urban, regional, rural and remote areas across Australia. Community pharmacies are primary healthcare providers and offer a constantly expanding range of professional health services to their local community.

Community pharmacies are the most frequently accessed and most accessible health destination, with over 443 million individual patient visits annually and the vast majority of pharmacies open after-hours, including on weekends. The network of almost 6000 community pharmacies accounts for the direct employment of more than 70,000 full-time, part-time and casual employees across Australia.

RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Guild welcomes the opportunity to comment on prospective advice to Government regarding changes to the Core Skills and Occupation List (CSOL) in 2025. The Guild acknowledges the importance of targeting skilled occupations to provide the most comprehensive migration for the Australian workforce.

Targeted for Consultation – Community Pharmacy Technician

As of August 2021, pharmacy technicians accounted for 9.8% of the Australian pharmacy workforce.¹ The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) recognises pharmacy technicians as a 'major support group' to pharmacists. Thus, their critical role of assisting to meet the health care needs of the Australian population cannot be understated.

Pharmacy technicians play an integral role in supporting the primary healthcare provided to patients in Community Pharmacies. They assist with dispensing medicines, keeping inventory and controlling stock, assisting customers and much more. Pharmacy technicians support Pharmacists to do their job to the best of their ability.

Presently, the Australian pharmacy workforce is experiencing supply shortages. Growth in demand, averaged at 2.35% per annum, as indicated by full time equivalent (FTE) employment and industry vacancies, outstrips growth in supply.² The Guild forecasts that by 2030, the community pharmacy workforce will harbour an excess demand of nearly 2000 FTE employees^{3[OBJ]}. The Guild advocates for the continued inclusion of community pharmacy technicians on the CSOL to assist in counteracting this projected lack of resources in the Australian community pharmacy setting.

As pharmacist scope of practice continues to increase, so too will the invaluable nature of qualified pharmacy technicians. 2024 completion rates of Community Pharmacy Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses, including pharmacy technician qualifications, show that only 34% of those who enrol in a Community Pharmacy qualification go on to complete said qualification. The Cert IV in Dispensary (SIR40216) had a completion rate of 47%, encompassing 150 graduates.⁴

Furthermore, pharmacy technicians are considered part of the non-professional pharmacy workforce, and there is a declining trend in the ratio of the non-professional workforce to pharmacists employed in pharmacies. This ratio has decreased from 2.11 to 1.62^{5[OBJ]}. Pharmacists working to their full scope of

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021.

² Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Pharmacy Workforce Supply and Demand Report, Edition 2.

³ Ibid.

⁴ NCVER, 2025.

⁵ Ibid.

practice may utilise the assistance of their non-professional workforce, including pharmacy technicians, meaning increased pharmacy technician numbers are necessary to support delivery of patient services and therefore should be included on the CSOL.

Migration is an essential tool used to negate the impacts of shortages and vacancies in any industry, Community Pharmacy included. Inclusion of pharmacy technicians on the CSOL and the subsequent ability of employers to express their need for skilled workers via immigration visa pathways will be extremely useful in filling the applicable vacancies in the industry.

The Guild reiterates its previous position (2024 Submission) that the retention of Community Pharmacy Technician (311331) on the CSOL is necessary to ensure a well-equipped and competent workforce that is currently experiencing supply and demand issues and a lack of VET graduations.

Retail Pharmacist

The Guild acknowledges that Retail Pharmacist (251513) was not on the list of Targeted for Consultation occupations. However, we are in support of its continued presence on the CSOL as per the 2024 list. The current distribution and density of pharmacists in Australia is not meeting the needs of the population as a whole. The continued inclusion of Retail Pharmacists on the CSOL allows for regional employers to continue to nominate and access skilled migrants to fill vacancies.

Also, the recognised shortage of Retail Pharmacists in all states except NSW, further exemplifies the need for Retail Pharmacists to remain on both the OSL and CSOL.