



## SHPA submission to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) comprehensive review – Round 2 (August 2023)

### SHPA recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** Separate the tasks performed by each occupation under the 2515 Pharmacists unit group as there are several distinct differences.

**Recommendation 2:** The occupation 251513 Retail Pharmacist is renamed *Community Pharmacist*.

**Recommendation 3a:** Separate the current single listing of 311215 Pharmacy Technicians into two occupations listed as *Community Pharmacy Technicians* and *Hospital Pharmacy Technicians* (alternative title 'Hospital Pharmacy Assistant') to reflect the contemporary pharmacy technician workforce and recognise their differences.

**Recommendation 3b:** *Hospital Pharmacy Assistant* should be added as an alternative title to *Hospital Pharmacy Technician* to ensure pharmacy assistants practicing in hospital settings are accurately captured.

**Recommendation 4:** All pharmacy technicians should be changed from Skill Level 2 to Skill Level 3.

**Recommendation 5:** Re-classify pharmacists under the 252 Health Therapy Professionals minor group.

**Recommendation 6:** Amend the 2515 Pharmacist unit group to include four occupations listed as *Hospital Pharmacist*, *Community Pharmacist*, *Primary Care Pharmacist*, and *Non-clinical Pharmacist*, to best reflect contemporary pharmacy practice in Australia.



## Questions

1. Please select the focus area for your submission:  
Medical, nursing and other health care services.
2. Are there any occupations in your industry, business or workplace that are not accurately described?

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional organisation for the 6,100+ Hospital Pharmacists, and their Hospital Pharmacist Intern and Hospital Pharmacy Technician colleagues working across Australia's health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use.

SHPA welcomes the comprehensive review of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) which is based primarily on a labour market from over 20 years ago. SHPA is pleased to provide input into the ANZSCO review to ensure the data gathered reflects the contemporary pharmacist and pharmacy technician workforce which has evolved significantly in this time.

### Role of Hospital Pharmacists

**Recommendation 1:** Separate the tasks performed by each occupation under the 2515 Pharmacists unit group as there are several distinct differences.

SHPA supports the retention of occupation 251511 Hospital pharmacists, however also believe their tasks should be described separately to other pharmacy occupations.

Hospital pharmacists undertake clinical pharmacy activities for individual patients to support the safe, quality and appropriate use of medicines, and minimise the inherent risk associated with the use of medicines to avoid adverse events and medication-related harm. Clinical pharmacy activities support a collaborative approach (with patients, carers, prescribers and other health professionals) to medicines management. In addition to dispensing and supply of medications, *SHPA's Standards of Practice for Clinical Pharmacy Services*<sup>1</sup> describes other clinical pharmacy activities undertaken by hospital pharmacists. These include;

- medication reconciliation
- partnered pharmacist medication charting (PPMC)
- assessment of current medication management
- clinical review, therapeutic drug monitoring and adverse drug reaction management
- contributing to the medication management plan
- providing medicines information to doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, patients and carers
- facilitating continuity of medication management on discharge or transfer
- participating in interdisciplinary ward rounds and meetings
- training and education
- participating in research
- quality improvement activities and peer review

### 251513 Retail Pharmacist

**Recommendation 2:** The occupation 251513 Retail Pharmacist is renamed *Community Pharmacist*.

Over the past two decades the role of a pharmacist practicing in the community has altered significantly. Pharmacists are well recognised and trusted in the community as highly educated health professionals. It is therefore important that the ANZSCO title for pharmacists practicing in the community reflects this change uses the term 'Community Pharmacist' not 'Retail Pharmacist.'



## 311215 Pharmacy Technician

**Recommendation 3a:** Separate the current single listing of 311215 Pharmacy Technicians into two occupations listed as *Community Pharmacy Technicians* and *Hospital Pharmacy Technicians* (alternative title '*Hospital Pharmacy Assistant*') to reflect the contemporary pharmacy technician workforce and recognise their differences.

**Recommendation 3b:** Hospital Pharmacy Assistant should be added as an alternative title to Hospital Pharmacy Technician (discussed in question 5) to ensure pharmacy assistants practicing in hospital settings are accurately captured.

*Note Recommendation 3a is discussed in question 5 under '3112 Medical Technicians unit group.'*

In Queensland, hospital pharmacy assistants are a job title in the *Hospital and Health Service General Employees (Queensland Health) Award – State 2015*.<sup>2</sup> Hospital pharmacy departments employ pharmacy assistants to support pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in the delivery of hospital pharmacy services through the provision of administrative and basic technical activities. These pharmacy assistants do not undertake any sales activities and so should be captured under the Hospital Pharmacy Technician occupation (discussed in question 5) rather than the 621411 Pharmacy Sales Assistant occupation or the creation of a new occupation code.

3. Are there any occupations in your industry, business, or workplace for which ANZSCO does not accurately reflect the skill level (1 to 5)?

**Recommendation 4:** All pharmacy technicians should be changed from Skill Level 2 to Skill Level 3.

The qualifications available to Hospital Pharmacy Technicians are Certificate III and Certificate IV in Hospital/Health Services Pharmacy Support. This is equivalent to a Skill Level 3 as per ANZSCO's skill level definitions, and not Skill Level 2.

4. Are there any occupations in your industry, business or workplace which we should consider classifying under a different ANZSCO category (e.g. sub-major, minor or unit group)?

## Re-classifying 2515 Pharmacists

**Recommendation 5:** Re-classify pharmacists under the 252 Health Therapy Professionals minor group.

ANZSCO currently classifies pharmacists under the 251 Health Diagnostic and Promotion Professionals minor group defined as a group of professionals that;

*...conduct diagnostic tests and operate equipment to assess illnesses, incapacities and disabilities, provide health advice and develop programs and policies which promote good health, safe and healthy working environments, and administer pharmaceuticals.*

SHPA does not believe this is an accurate reflection of the role of a pharmacist. Generally speaking, pharmacists do not conduct diagnostic tests or operate equipment to assess illness, and pharmacists working in hospitals do not undertake health promotion activities.

SHPA therefore recommends pharmacists are re-classified under the 252 Health Therapy Professionals minor group, defined as a group of professionals that;

*... assess, diagnose and treat illnesses and disabilities, and provide therapeutic services.*

This definition is more closely aligned to the role of pharmacists. In addition, the Australian Government recognises pharmacists as allied health professionals alongside physiotherapists and occupational therapists, and states that allied health professionals are those who can treat conditions and illnesses. The majority of allied health professions including physiotherapist, occupational therapist, podiatrists and



dental practitioners, are classified in the ANZSCO 252 Health Therapy Professionals minor group. Please [click here](#) to view the Australian Government page about allied health care.

Like most of these health professionals, pharmacists work in multidisciplinary teams with various other healthcare workers to provide specialised support to patients, and are highly educated at Skill Level 1.

5. Are there any occupations in your industry, business or workplace that should be separately identified with a unique code?

### 2515 Pharmacist unit group

**Recommendation 6:** Amend the 2515 Pharmacist unit group to include four occupations listed as *Hospital Pharmacist, Community Pharmacist, Primary Care Pharmacist, and Non-clinical Pharmacist*, to best reflect contemporary pharmacy practice in Australia.

a. Primary Care Pharmacist:

The pharmacy profession has undergone significant reform and evolution over the past two decades that have rendered the current ANZSCO for pharmacists not fit-for-purpose. Over the past 20 years there has been a notable shift in the role of pharmacists from dispensing and supply of medications to a more clinical role centred around medication safety and quality use of medicines in various settings of care.

The expanded roles undertaken by pharmacists in Australia now include:

- Home Medicines Review Pharmacist
- Aged Care Pharmacist
- General Practice Pharmacist
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service Pharmacist

SHPA recommends ANZSCO assigns pharmacists practicing in any of these roles listed above, to a new occupation titled *Primary Care Pharmacist*. Whilst some refer to these roles as consultant pharmacists, SHPA is of the opinion that the term 'consultant' is more appropriate for pharmacists who have completed additional credentialling and training in specific clinical areas of practice to provide senior level support to less qualified pharmacists, as is the case in the medical model.

b. Non-clinical Pharmacist

A significant proportion of registered pharmacists practice in non-patient facing roles, using their skills and knowledge as pharmacists to support the safe, effective delivery of services in the profession, which satisfies the definition of practice outlined in the Pharmacy Board of Australia's [Registration Standard: Recency of Practice](#). These roles include:

- Pharmaceutical industry
- Compounding companies
- Education/academia
- Non-clinical research
- Government departments
- Regulatory agencies
- Professional organisations
- Policy and advocacy
- Management of health services

SHPA recommends ANZSCO assigns pharmacists practicing in any of these roles listed above, to a new occupation titled *Non-clinical Pharmacist*. As highlighted above, the current 251512 Industrial Pharmacist occupation can be retired and blended into this Non-clinical Pharmacist occupation.



Similarly, this occupation can capture pharmacists practicing as managers of health services including Directors of Pharmacy.

### **3112 Medical Technicians unit group**

**Recommendation 3a:** Separate the current single listing of 311215 Pharmacy Technicians into two occupations listed as *Community Pharmacy Technicians* and *Hospital Pharmacy Technicians* (alternative title '*Hospital Pharmacy Assistant*') to reflect the contemporary pharmacy technician workforce and recognise their differences.

**Recommendation 3b:** Hospital Pharmacy Assistant should be added as an alternative title to Hospital Pharmacy Technician (discussed in question 5) to ensure pharmacy assistants practicing in hospital settings are accurately captured.

Pharmacy technicians practicing in hospital settings are trained to support pharmacists in the delivery of hospital pharmacy services through the provision of administrative, technical and leadership activities, often having a hospital/health services specific qualification as mentioned previously. Hospital pharmacy technicians therefore undertake activities unique to the needs of their practice setting and that are often not provided by their community pharmacy counterparts.

Hospital pharmacy technicians can support pharmacists in many care settings, depending on their qualifications and training. In addition to dispensing, compounding, inventory management and medicine distribution, pharmacy technicians can provide supervised clinical support on wards, outpatient clinics and outreach services. Some of the clinical support activities undertaken by hospital pharmacy technicians are included below, as outlined in SHPA's Standard of Practice for Pharmacy Technicians to support Clinical Pharmacy Services<sup>3</sup>:

- Medication reconciliation
- Adverse drug reaction management
- Medication review
- Medicines information for patients and ongoing care
- Medicines information for health professionals
- Therapeutic drug monitoring
- Quality improvement systems
- Tech-check-tech
- Bedside medication management

Expanded scope of practice for hospital pharmacy technicians has enabled them to undertake highly technical activities such as tech-check-tech, a model in which these highly trained technicians can check the accuracy of a dispensed item against the corresponding prescription or medication order. Additionally, ward-based pharmacy technicians also provide Bedside Medication Management (BMM) services, a model in which these highly trained technicians co-ordinate and streamline timely supply of medications, coordinate, and maintain appropriate storage of medications, as well as to remove ceased and unwanted medications from patient care areas.

Since the role of hospital-based pharmacy technicians is greatly varied to that of community-based pharmacy technicians, SHPA recommends that the 3112 Medical Technicians unit group is amended to capture the two distinct pharmacy technician workforces by listing them as separate occupations – Hospital Pharmacy Technician and Community Pharmacy Technician.

SHPA notes that Queensland employs hospital pharmacy assistants to support pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in the delivery of hospital pharmacy services through the provision of administrative and basic technical activities. These pharmacy assistants do not undertake any sales activities and so should be captured under the recommended Hospital Pharmacy Technician occupation rather than the





621411 Pharmacy Sales Assistant occupation. SHPA suggests an alternative title of *Hospital Pharmacy Assistant* should be added to the Hospital Pharmacy Technician to ensure those pharmacy assistants practicing in hospital settings are captured correctly.

*Note Recommendation 3b has been also discussed in question 2 under ‘311215 Pharmacy Technician.’*

6. Are there occupations that are emerging, or that you anticipate will emerge, in the next 5 to 10 years in your industry, business or workplace?

As discussed above, the pharmacy workforce continues to evolve, and new occupations and specialisations will continue to emerge. Hospital pharmacists are practice in specialised multidisciplinary clinical units thus clinical specialisation is an area SHPA anticipates significant growth over the next five to ten years.

7. Is there any other information you can provide to help support your submission?

Summary of SHPA recommended changes:

| SHPA’s recommended classifications  | SHPA’s recommended Skill Level |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 252 Pharmacists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hospital Pharmacist</li> <li>Community Pharmacist</li> <li>Primary Care Pharmacist</li> <li>Non-clinical Pharmacist</li> </ul>                      | Skill level 1                  |
| 3112 Medical Technicians: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hospital Pharmacy Technician (alternative title: Hospital Pharmacy Assistant)</li> <li>Community Pharmacy Dispensary Technician</li> </ul> | Skill level 3                  |

8. Please provide information on any other issues in relation to ANZSCO that has not already been covered in the survey.

N/A

## References

<sup>1</sup> SHPA Committee of Specialty Practice in Clinical Pharmacy. (2013). SHPA Standards of Practice for Clinical Pharmacy Services. J Pharm Pract Res 2013; 43 (2 suppl): S2-S69.

<sup>2</sup> Queensland Health. (2023). Hospital and Health Services General Employees Award – State 2015. Available at: [https://www.qirc.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-03/hospital\\_health\\_010323.pdf](https://www.qirc.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-03/hospital_health_010323.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Bekema C., Bruno-Tomé A., Butnoris M., Carter J., Diprose E., Hickman L., Raleigh R., Teasdale T.L. (2019). Standard of Practice for Pharmacy Technicians to support Clinical Pharmacy Services. The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia; Collingwood: 2019.

