



THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP
Minister for Health and Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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An Important Role for Pharmacists in Health Reform

Nicola Roxon today visited the Altona Meadows Amcal Pharmacy to launch the Pharmacy Guild's 'Ask Your Pharmacist Week'.

Ask Your Pharmacist Week highlights the important role community pharmacies and pharmacists play in Australia's health care system, including in the Government's health reform agenda.

In Altona Meadows, and across Australia, communities value the frontline health care role pharmacists fulfil.

Pharmacists are often the first to see consumers who are seeking information about and assistance with their health care. They help people take responsibility for their own health by supporting and reinforcing health literacy and healthy practices.

Recent research confirms patients see community pharmacies as important, trusted and frequently-used sources of information about their medications.

The Rudd Government recognises the important position pharmacists occupy in the national health landscape.

The recent report from National Health and Hospital Reform Commission highlights the need for all Australians to be able to access medicines and appropriate pharmaceutical services. Community pharmacies help achieve this via a network of around 5000 pharmacies across Australia.

Traditionally, pharmacists have provided advice and assistance for the more common ailments such as colds, headaches, allergies and gastrointestinal conditions. With increasing efficiencies in dispensing and use of dispensary techniques, highly-skilled pharmacists are now able to spend more time counselling patients.

This means pharmacists are ideally placed in the front line of health service provision to form part of a multi-disciplinary team that delivers the services and resources most relevant to the needs of the community. This will help achieve our aim of focussing resources on what is best for the patient – better outcomes, a reduction in inequalities and a better journey through the health system.

Ask Your Pharmacist Week runs until 6 September.

People can now provide the Australian Government with their views about ways to improve the health system through the *yourHealth* website at <http://www.yourhealth.gov.au>

For all media inquiries, please contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 7220