



The Hon Mark Butler MP
Minister for Health and Ageing
Minister for Disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme

Ref No: MC25-014983

Mayor Matt Burnett
President
Australian Local Government Association
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Dear Mayor

Thank you for your correspondence of 14 August 2025 outlining resolutions from the 2025 National General Assembly of Local Government.

In regards to motion 109 from the Huon Valley Council, the Australian Government is committed to ensuring that health professionals are supported to work at the top of their scope of practice. In December 2024, Health Ministers agreed to consider a Skills and Capability Matrix and Framework as recommended in the *Unleashing the Potential of Health Workforce: Scope of Practice Review*. The work is being led by an internal departmental taskforce in the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. More information on the taskforce and how to contact them can be found on at the department's website at www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/primary-care-and-workforce-reviews-taskforce.

In regards to motion 127 from the Shellharbour City Council, the Government recognises the vital role of preventive health in helping Australians live longer, healthier lives. The National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2030 (Strategy) provides a strong platform for system-reform in Australia. The Strategy includes an aim to increase investment in prevention, which is underpinned by investment in preventive health rising to be 5% of total health expenditure across Commonwealth, state and territory governments by 2030.

In regards to motion 137 from the Forbes Shire Council, the regulation of pharmacy premises and pharmacy ownership is governed by state and territory legislation. These laws restrict the ownership of a pharmacy to a registered pharmacist or pharmacists, while some also specifically prohibit the co-location of a pharmacy within a supermarket.

The regulatory scheme by which Government regulates pharmacies approved to supply medicines subsidised by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme is specified by the *National Health Act 1953* and includes the Pharmacy Location Rules (Rules). The Government is committed to the Rules as they promote and encourage an appropriate geographical spread of community pharmacies, including in regional and rural areas.

The Rules include a number of provisions for the establishment of a new pharmacy, where the relevant requirements of the Rules are met. Most of these provisions include a distance requirement to the nearest pharmacy, and other requirements specific to each provision. For example, some provisions require services such as prescribing medical practitioners and a supermarket of a minimum size are within a prescribed distance of the proposed premises. A number of reviews of pharmacy regulation have been undertaken over recent years, and there are no immediate plans to review the Rules.

I will allow my colleague, the Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government to respond to motion 80 from the Livingston Shire Council.

Thank you for writing on these important matters.

Yours sincerely



Mark Butler

23 / 09 / 2025