

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



australian<sup>®</sup>  
pharmacy  
council

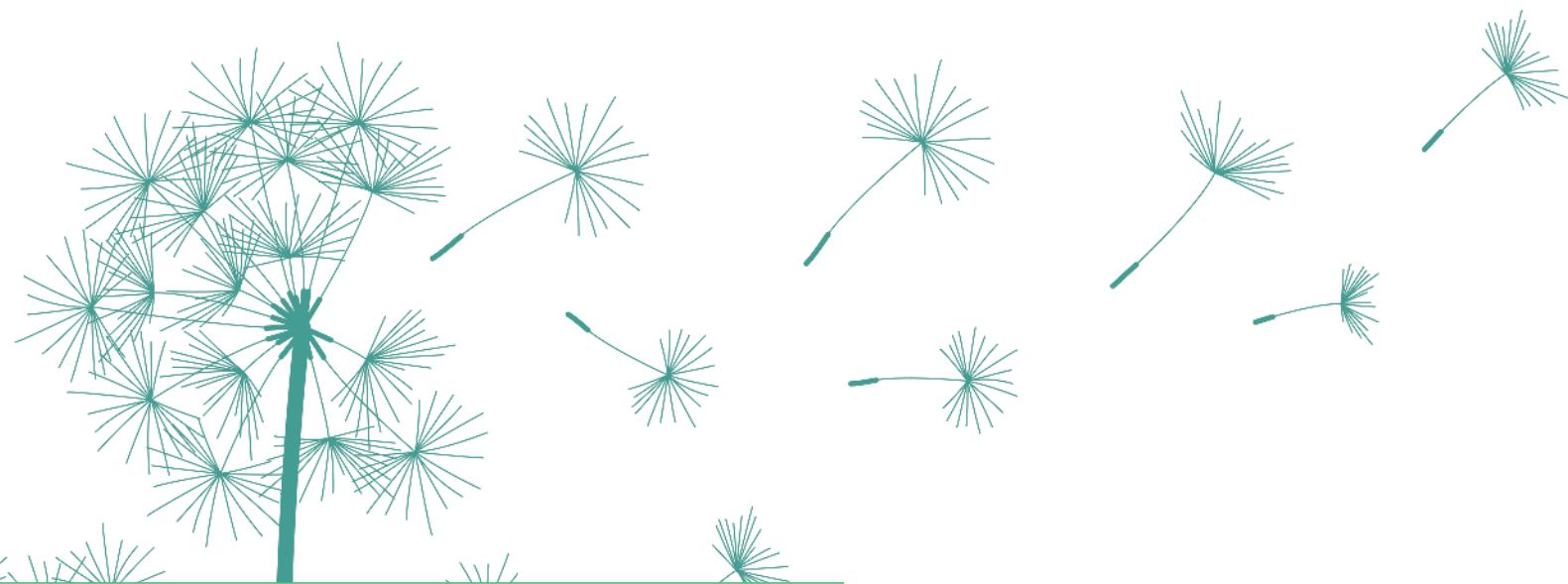
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) gratefully acknowledges Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of country throughout Australia. We pay our respects to the resilience, strength and wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past and present, across the nation.

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' vast knowledge in native plants and their uses. They were our first pharmacists. Country has provided medicines and healing throughout history. We acknowledge this important connection to Country and the impacts colonisation continues to have on this integral practice.



There are over 36,000 registered pharmacists currently in Australia.

Our role is to ensure that they have the knowledge and competencies required for safe and effective practice in Australia, at the point of general registration and beyond. Whether their journey is through Australian universities, or they have qualified overseas, they must meet the high standards that we set.



## WHAT WE DO

**Our purpose is to advance and assure quality in pharmacy education in Australia.**

**Our vision is to lead accreditation and assessment of education of the pharmacy sector nationally and internationally.**

**Our purpose and vision are executed through our strategic priorities:**

- Leading, influencing and collaborating
- Future focussed standards and assessment
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' health
- An innovative, sustainable and resilient organisation

**Our core functions are to:**

- Develop accreditation standards for pharmacy education programs and organisations.
- Accredite pharmacy degree and intern training programs.
- Accredite pharmacist education programs for registered pharmacists looking to complete additional, specialised training.
- Accredite organisations who accredit continuing professional development activities.
- Develop and deliver written examinations for pharmacists and interns seeking to register in Australia.
- Assess the knowledge and experience of overseas trained pharmacists who want to migrate to or practise in Australia.

## WHO WE ARE

**We are a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission.**

APC has a long and proud history of over 40 years of operation serving the community. We work under assignment from the **Pharmacy Board of Australia within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS)**.



# 2023-24 OUR VALUES

## RESPECT

We treat all people with courtesy, compassion and tolerance, and all situations are handled in a timely manner.



## LIFE-LONG LEARNING

We encourage intellectual curiosity and ongoing personal and professional development.

## SUPPORT

We care about our fellow team members and stakeholders. We own and learn from our mistakes, build resilience and celebrate success.



## INNOVATION

We actively seek new ways of working with the aim of improving efficiency and effectiveness.

## CREATIVITY

We encourage originality, enquiry, risk-taking, critical thinking and diversity. We are constantly striving for excellence.



## TRANSPARENCY

We are open, honest and trustworthy in all we do. We take responsibility for our actions.

## FAIRNESS

We treat everyone in an impartial, equitable, ethical, sensitive and just manner.



## COURAGE

We support one another to take calculated risks to achieve our goals.

# CHAIR REPORT ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR SUE KIRSA

Chair, February 2018 – May 2024



**The last financial year saw immense change and essential restoration after the pandemic. Through this all, the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) maintained its purpose of assuring quality in pharmacy education. APC's work in accreditation and assessment is the safety-net for the Australian community's confidence in the nation's pharmacy sector. This work is the core of our role in assuring public safety on behalf of the profession.**

I want to acknowledge the extraordinary achievements of APC this year, and thank the APC Board, our wonderful CEO, executive, employees and our many, many collaborators for their contribution to the organisation's success.

In the past 12 months, APC has continued to work with the pharmacy profession and our interdisciplinary colleagues on a number of pivotal projects that will support the expanding roles and scope of pharmacists into the future.

As global health needs continue to evolve, pharmacists everywhere play a crucial role in improving the wellbeing of our communities. Their expertise goes beyond dispensing medication – they are vital contributors to patient care, public health, and the advancement of healthcare systems. With initial prescribing trials taking place across Australia, APC has ensured that scopes expand under evidence-based, quality-assured standards.

Our standards were developed under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme in consultation with experts from across the healthcare landscape and community representatives. They equip pharmacists with the knowledge, skills and attributes to be

competent and safe prescribers within their scope of practice, as authorised under relevant legislation.

We are delighted that Australia continues to be seen as such an attractive destination for pharmacists to live and work. In 2023, we welcomed National Cabinet's findings of the final Kruk independent review of health practitioner regulatory settings, which highlighted the need for streamlined processes for overseas-trained pharmacists to reduce workforce shortages. We have seen APC implement some fantastic initiatives to support candidates through their journey, such as lowering upfront costs of assessment fees.

I am proud to be a part of this profession during such a significant point in time, and I'm optimistic of the future, especially given the role APC plays in shaping it.

We have had some changes to the composition of the APC Board over the year. As of May 2024, I stepped down as Chair of APC, with Professor Sarah Roberts-Thomson elected as Chair. Professor Kirstie Galbraith was elected Deputy Chair, and I remain on the Board as a Director.

It has been an honour and a privilege to chair the Board of the APC over the past 6 years.

Over that time, APC has grown significantly, developed and implemented a range of new standards, introduced workplace-based assessments for the intern year, significantly improved the candidate experience for overseas-trained pharmacists and accredited a number of new programs of study for initial registration and expanded scopes of practice.

APC has maintained our focus on embedding Indigenous leadership in pharmacy education, and a strong commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander health. Whilst the Leaders in Indigenous Pharmacy Profession Education Network is in its infancy, I am excited to see pivotal developments in the future.

As I step away from the Chair, I am confident that APC will continue to develop and thrive under the leadership of our new Chair, Sarah Roberts-Thomson.

**Sue Kirsa**

**Chair (February 2018 – May 2024)**

## CHAIR REPORT PROFESSOR SARAH ROBERTS-THOMSON

**Chair, May 2024 – Present**



**I feel privileged to assume the role of Chair of the Australian Pharmacy Council at this important time for the pharmacy profession.**

I want to thank Sue Kirsa for her exceptional guidance. She has been a passionate advocate and a dedicated leader for both the pharmacy profession and APC. Her legacy of commitment and excellence sets a high standard that I am committed to upholding.

I am looking forward to the future as APC continues to create meaningful impact through quality assurance and high standards. In particular, the effective

and safe implementation of the new accreditation standards, the embedding of Indigenous leadership in pharmacy education, and the many research projects that advance the capabilities of the pharmacy profession.

**Sarah Roberts-Thomson**

**Chair (May 2024 – Present)**

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT BRONWYN CLARK



**APC has had an exceptional year, successfully delivering some fabulous initiatives to drive the profession forward, add more capacity to the pharmacist workforce and assure the abilities of pharmacists to expand their scopes of practice. This was on top of our business-as-usual activities of accreditation and assessment for general registration purposes.**

APC has had an exceptional year, successfully delivering some fabulous initiatives to drive the profession forward, add more capacity to the pharmacist workforce and assure the abilities of pharmacists to expand their scopes of practice. This was on top of our business-as-usual activities of accreditation and assessment for general registration purposes.

None of this would be possible without collaboration with, and confidence from, our key partners. Last year, we had confirmation of our renewed assignment as the accreditation authority for pharmacy for the next 5 years with the Pharmacy Board of Australia. This was complemented with additional requests for standards development for both the Pharmacy Board and the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care. This year, we delivered on our standards development for both bodies, with new initiatives for the ever-expanding scopes of practice, including medication management reviews, Aged Care Onsite pharmacists and pharmacist prescribers.

We have also delivered a strong financial surplus. This surplus is out of the ordinary, and one we do not expect to see in coming years. We are a not-for-profit with clear priorities that require us to invest our surpluses

back into the business. We therefore welcome the opportunities this creates in further supporting our candidates and APC's key priorities, particularly as we continue to respond to high demand and recommendations within the Kruk independent review of health practitioner regulatory settings. Already, this has allowed us to implement the Candidate Choice program which will reduce the upfront costs for overseas candidates, which we are proud of. Our investments in ICT transformation and future international accreditation are also possible due to our current strong financial position.

Our team have grown substantially this year to allow us to deliver on our strategic priorities and programs. To accommodate this expansion, we moved to a new tenancy across the Canberra Airport precinct which we could configure to better accommodate our people and our new ways of hybrid working. More meeting rooms, high-quality video conferencing, and excellent break out areas have allowed us to thrive in a fit-for-purpose space. Our team remains connected with monthly Canberra Connection Days, where all our people gather for learning and collaboration.

Recognising those that have shaped our past can be a platform for us to embrace the future.

This year, we established a new set of awards in the name of the late Dr Erica Sainsbury. Erica was a much-loved colleague who shifted the dial in our thinking about accreditation and social accountability. The awards recognise both early career educators and intern supervisors, and having Erica's family with us to present the awards to the inaugural winners was a highlight of this year for me.

We remain committed to listening to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices. This year, the Voice to Parliament referendum brought this issue into sharper focus, which I recognise was painful for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We chose to centre our IPE *Colloquium™* around this, despite the outcome, to highlight our commitment to amplifying First Nations voices. At APC, we are aiming to disrupt health profession education in such a way that broadens thinking beyond the accepted systems for the betterment of all.

I am privileged to lead this innovative and extraordinary organisation. But we couldn't achieve what we do without an incredible team of people who commit 100% to APC. This includes our staff, our committees, assessors, Subject Matter Experts and exam writers. And I am so well supported by my fabulous executive team of Brett Streatfeild, Kate Spencer and Wendy Shephard. They are simply inspirational.

Lastly, I want to thank our outgoing Chair, Associate Professor Sue Kirsas, for leading APC for 6 years, and welcome Professor Sarah Roberts-Thomson into the role.

Sue and I first met nearly 20 years ago as appointees to the APC Accreditation Committee from our previous organisations, and to be working together as Chair and CEO these past few years has been a highlight for me personally and professionally. Sue is a fearless leader, who has guided the APC with compassion, courage, and a drive to create change in pharmacy education through quality assurance and standard setting. She leaves a legacy of excellence beyond compare.

Sarah has been on our Board for several years and I am very much looking forward to her guidance, support and leadership into the future. We are truly blessed to have such fabulous leaders in our Board that are committed to assuring and advancing quality in pharmacy education.

**Bronwyn Clark**  
Chief Executive Officer





# Leading, influencing and collaborating

We will enhance our influence with key partners  
to create opportunities that facilitate and advance  
capabilities of the pharmacy profession.



**We work within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme to advance the capabilities of the pharmacy profession. Our expertise and collaborations are fundamental to ensuring quality and safety in pharmacy.**

This year has seen the implementation of pivotal initiatives across migration, expanding scopes of practice, events and collaborative networks.

Through our expertise in quality assurance, assessment, research and standard setting, we offer solutions that address workforce issues, positioning APC as leaders within the pharmacy profession and across the healthcare landscape.



## RESPONDING TO THE KRUK REVIEW

**In 2023, we welcomed National Cabinet's findings of the final Kruk independent review of health practitioner regulatory settings, which highlighted the need for streamlined processes for overseas-trained pharmacists to reduce workforce shortages.**

The report identified immediate measures that governments and regulators need to take to quicken registration processes, stating that Australia relies on and benefits from the skills of international health practitioners.

APC upholds its values of support and fairness and has responded to the report's recommendations whilst maintaining high standards.

### **Expanding our footprint to meet demand**

As demand expanded, we provided additional international exam centres to make exams more accessible to those who must travel across countries to sit an exam. All additional test centres are required to meet security standards to deliver successful high-stakes exams.

We are exploring the inclusion of additional countries in our Competency Stream and scoping what a fast-track route could look like for them.

We continue to collaborate with organisations such as the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the Australasian College of Pharmacy and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia who offer job-ready courses after the Knowledge Stream exam, ensuring that overseas-trained pharmacists can integrate into the workforce.

We are pleased that Australia continues to be a desired destination for pharmacists to live and work.

We understand the more recent challenges that some of our candidates have faced due to the increase in demand and recognise their journey to work in Australia has come with personal and financial commitment. Whilst APC is not a decision maker in visa approvals, internship placements or migration policy, we are committed to supporting their journey. However, we must do so whilst prioritising the safety of the Australian public through rigorous assessments and quality assurance.

## ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR EXPANDING SCOPES OF PRACTICE

**As global health needs continue to evolve, pharmacists everywhere play a crucial role in improving the wellbeing of our communities. Their expertise goes beyond dispensing medication – they are vital contributors to patient care, public health, and the advancement of healthcare systems.**

To meet these needs, scopes are expanding. Our accreditation standards programs can be delivered to ensure competency, safety and quality.

This year saw the finalisation of the development and implementation of the Accreditation Standards for Pharmacist Education Programs.

In August 2023, the Department of Health and Aged Care approved the Accreditation Standards for **Medication Management Review (MMR) Pharmacist and Aged Care On-site Pharmacist (ACOP) Education Programs**. In addition to our standards and performance outcomes framework, we developed an indicative role description for an Aged Care Onsite Pharmacist to assist stakeholders to understand the types of activities that a pharmacist in an aged care setting may do to support the quality of medicines management.

Graduates of the aged care on-site programs will be able to be engaged under the Department's Aged Care On-site Pharmacist Measure, which provides funding for credentialed pharmacists to be employed on-site in

residential aged care homes. They will work with aged care staff to improve health outcomes of residents, reduce medication-related harm and optimise the use of medicines.

We accredited the first 3 programs against these standards in 2024.

In December 2023, the Pharmacy Board of Australia approved the Accreditation Standards for **Pharmacist Prescriber Education Programs**. Pharmacist prescriber education programs will equip pharmacists with the knowledge, skills and attributes to be competent and safe prescribers within their scope of practice, as authorised under relevant legislation.

Our development process included interprofessional collaboration and consultation, which is indicative of the role of pharmacist prescribers as members of patient-centred and multi-disciplinary care teams.

We accredited the first program against these standards in March 2024.

# INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS ACCREDITATION COLLABORATIVE FORUM

**We continued our work as an active member of the Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative (HPAC) Forum. The Forum established an interprofessional education (IPE) Working Group, led by APC CEO, Bronwyn Clark, to further progress the interprofessional education initiatives we started in 2015.**

Interprofessional education is essential to the future of healthcare because it equips practitioners with the skills to work cohesively in diverse, multidisciplinary teams. It helps break down silos and encourages mutual respect and trust, which are vital in addressing the growing demands on healthcare systems.

As part of this work, a research project was initiated to explore the vision of collaborative practitioners and develop practical guidance for education providers.

## **The research project was to:**

- gather perspectives on collaborative practice from consumers, health practitioners and education providers as a program of education research.
- collate and review examples of IPE and interprofessional collaborative practice (IPCP) to determine how to support education providers and accreditation authorities in the provision of effective IPE.

The final report was published in September 2024, and we look forward to continuing this essential work to develop collaborative practitioners for the future.

## AHPRA ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

### **Interprofessional Collaborative Statement Of Intent**

As pharmacy's accreditation body, we play a role in encouraging and supporting IPE through ensuring the quality of collaborative health professionals past graduation.

This year, we worked with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) and other stakeholders to develop the [Interprofessional Collaborative Practice Statement of Intent](#).

The statement of intent was published in March 2024 and aims to embed interprofessional collaborative practice across the continuum of healthcare settings. Our CEO represented the HPAC Forum on the development of this statement and has been invited to continue in the implementation phase of this work.



## WORKPLACE BASED ASSESSMENT

### **– Implementation and Evaluation of WBA Tools**

Following the publication of the Workplace-Based Assessment (WBA) tools in 2022 and their subsequent implementation, this fiscal year we have commissioned a research project to evaluate the implementation of the tools.

We have shared our preliminary findings at pharmacy education conferences and continue to provide support for use of the WBA tools by organising interactive workshops and other activities.





## INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL COLLABORATION

**We have continued collaborating with national and international pharmacy organisations who share our goal of protecting public health.**

As an active part of the Australian Pharmacy Leaders Forum (APLF), we collaborated with other peak pharmacy bodies on issues of workforce, which we will continue to do to support both our domestic students and our overseas-trained pharmacist candidates.

We play an important role in advancing quality in pharmacy across the globe. Our international reach includes involvement in the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) and the Global Forum on Quality Assurance of Continuing Education and Continuing Professional Development (GFQACE), where APC CEO Bronwyn Clark is Chair of the FIP Provision and Partnerships Consortium. Through this work, we continue an innovative initiative to connect FIP members across with world with quality education and programs.

Our FIP Seal recognises our high standards and commitment to advancing pharmacy worldwide, and we look forward to seeing future accreditation agencies receive the Seal.

### Strengthening global ties

We had the privilege of being invited to the JSS University College of Pharmacy in Mysuru and Ooty in India. We met with students, clinical pharmacists and academics as well as presenting talks as part of the Indo-Australian symposium at JSS College of Pharmacy at Ooty.

We also visited our colleagues from the Singapore Pharmacy Council, where we visited several hospitals and saw the work of hospital pharmacists at the Singapore General and the National University Health Service hospitals.

#### **We also continued our collaborations globally with the following organisations:**

- the Pharmacy Council of New Zealand (PCNZ)
- Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC)
- General Pharmaceutical Council (Great Britain)
- Accreditation Council on Pharmaceutical Education (ACPE)
- National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP)

# DR ERICA SAINSBURY AWARDS

The Dr Erica Sainsbury Awards were set up in 2023 and have been established to recognise and reward leaders in pharmacy education and practice.

We have established these awards to honour Dr Erica Sainsbury for the legacy she left in pharmacy education. These awards are fully funded by the APC.

The **Early Career Pharmacy Educator** Award recognises and rewards an individual who demonstrates innovation and passion in teaching and who places students first and foremost.

The **Pharmacist Supervisor** Award recognises and rewards pharmacists who display the attributes and skills considered invaluable in the training of pharmacy interns during the period of supervised practice.

## 2023 Recipients:

**Chiao Xin Lim**, 2023 Early Pharmacy Educator Award Winner

**Cathryn Carlisle**, 2023 Pharmacist Supervisor Award Winner

**Gillian Oates**, 2023 Pharmacist Supervisor Award Winner



*Chiao Xin Lim, 2023 Early Pharmacy Educator Award Winner.*

“ I believe that we have a duty to advocate for the industry to encourage our future pharmacists to really aim high and I think we have a responsibility to create a safe space for them to be able to do so ”



*Cathryn Carlisle, 2023 Pharmacist Supervisor Award Winner*

“ I’m immensely hopeful for pharmacy interns and their careers ahead. They have a wonderful opportunity by remaining in the hospital setting to be at the forefront of healthcare advances and research, moreover, with increased collaboration with multi-disciplinary teams. They play a pivotal role in delivering patient-focused healthcare. These young pharmacists are the future and it’s a privilege to be part of their journey. I watch them grow and evolve professionally, overcome challenges and celebrate successes and hopefully provide them with a positive experience for their careers ahead. ”



*Gillian Oates, 2023 Pharmacist Supervisor Award Winner*

“ I’m committed to making a difference to the student learning experience through designing and implementing Innovative learning approaches that help to engage students in apply and authentic learning and this is important because this will help shape pharmacy graduates who are lifelong learners, work ready and passionate about their profession. ”





## THE EMERITUS PROFESSOR LLOYD SANSOM AO DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES

Professor Lloyd Sansom AO Distinguished Lecture Series serves as a premiere platform for renown and respected leaders in pharmacy to share their deep expertise, insights, and experiences with members and stakeholders.

In 2023, Paul Sinclair AM, President of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) spoke on navigating the evolving landscape of regulation and education within pharmacy practice.

“The time of the pharmacist is now. Never have I seen such opportunity for our profession. We are transitioning from a supply model which has served us so well but will not be fit for purpose to sustain us going forward. Artificial Intelligence, automation and government policy will all disrupt that supply model.



“ Young pharmacists are the future of our profession. We must do everything to mentor them and support them in their early career. Expansion of scope of practice will offer far more satisfying career paths for them and will project them as first point of call in the primary healthcare space. ”

*Paul Sinclair AM, President of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP)*

# Future focused standards and assessment

Our approach to standard setting, accreditation and assessment is evidence-based, agile and socially accountable to meet future needs.



## ACCREDITATION

**We are the safety-net for the Australian community's confidence in the nation's pharmacists. We develop accreditation standards to ensure pharmacists are equipped with the competency and knowledge to deliver safe and effective healthcare.**

We accredit pharmacy education programs and organisations against our standards to ensure programs are evidence-based and meet evolving needs of our communities.

### Pharmacy programs

This year, we have conducted accreditation site visits of pharmacy degree programs to 8 education providers across 5 states and territories.

We have observed providers responding to the rapid pace of change in the sector to ensure their programs remain contemporary. This has included broadening placement opportunities in aged care homes and other settings and providing interprofessional education activities.

This is contributing to the need for pharmacy graduates to be agile members of a collaborative healthcare team to meet the emerging and future needs of the Australian public.

In August 2023, the Department of Health and Aged Care approved the Accreditation Standards for

**Medication Management Review (MMR) Pharmacist and Aged Care On-site Pharmacist (ACOP) Education Programs.** We accredited the first 3 against the standards in 2024.

In December 2023, the Pharmacy Board of Australia approved the Accreditation Standards for **Pharmacist Prescriber Education Programs.** We accredited the first program against these standards in March 2024.

### Supporting education providers

We continued our important work supporting education providers to understand and meet the accreditation standards. Our support included webinars for providers who were about to commence our reaccreditation process, and one-on-one guidance for providers seeking first time accreditation against our Pharmacist Education Program standards.

We are working towards implementing an Accreditation Management System (AMS) that will make it easier for providers to submit their accreditation documentation and to manage their ongoing reporting requirements.

We accredited

**4** NEW pharmacist  
education programs



We conducted

**8** Site visits for degree  
programs



We received

**17** Notifications  
of Change to  
a program



There are currently

**50** Degree  
programs  
accredited

**6** Intern training  
programs  
accredited



# ASSESSMENT

## Exam development

**At the core of APC’s examination development is quality, fairness, and consistency. APC exams are continually evaluated by Subject Matter Experts to ensure that exams remain relevant and that they are in keeping with contemporary examination practice.**

This financial year, the assessment team has focused on creating new exam questions by updating question banks for all exams and utilising psychometric analysis. We have implemented pairwise scaling as an innovative approach to facilitate our exam content development processes. This initiative has received strong support from our exams advisory committee and international experts in the field.

All APC exams are computer-based exams delivered by secure means through a trusted exam delivery partner. We deliver these in test centres in Australia and around the world, with some exams also available by secure remote online proctored delivery.

The Knowledge Assessment of Pharmaceutical Sciences (KAPS) will be replaced by the Overseas Pharmacists Readiness Assessment (*OPRA™*) exam in March 2025. This new exam has a stronger focus on therapeutics and the application of knowledge to align with evolving pharmacy practice within Australia. This provides candidates with a contemporary and comprehensive assessment of their knowledge and skills, enabling them to commence an internship in Australia, as part of their journey to becoming registered.

In preparation for this change, subject matter experts (SMEs) have been involved in developing questions for new exam content areas, and external psychometrician consultants have been engaged to apply Rasch methodology to the *OPRA™* exam. We continue to explore innovative and evidence-based approaches to enhance our development processes and assessment products.

Our assessment team hosted a total of eight content development workshops for our suite of exams, including Intern Written, Competency Assessment of Overseas Pharmacists (*CAOP™*), KAPS, and *OPRA™*.

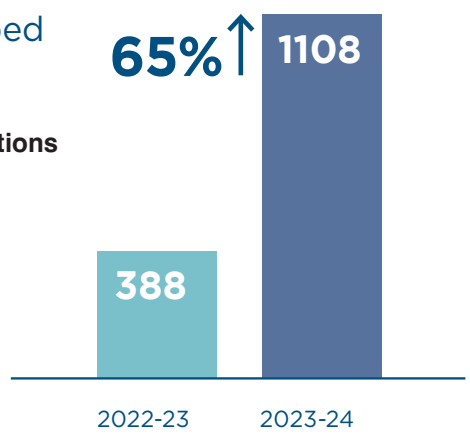
In the workshops, we collaborated with 48 SMEs in the pharmacy profession to develop 667 new questions for the KAPS and *OPRA™* exams and 441 new questions for the Intern Written and *CAOP™* exams. This is an increase of 720 new questions developed from the same reporting period in 2022-23. These new questions ensure that our exams reflect contemporary knowledge and pharmacy practice in Australia.

We collaborated with

**48** Subject Matter Experts across the profession



We developed  
**1108**  
new exam questions







# CANDIDATE ENGAGEMENT

**Our rigorous assessments and verifications ensure that overseas-trained pharmacists and Australian interns are equipped with the competency and skills required to provide safe and effective healthcare to our communities.**

We continue to put the candidate at the centre of our processes and functions. Our candidate relationship team is dedicated to supporting and improving the candidate journey experience. We have joined our support services together to deliver a cohesive approach, which enables a single point of contact across the entire journey, from verification through to examinations.

Through feedback from candidates, we consistently work towards meeting their needs. We have also worked closely with our accredited continuing professional development (CPD) organisations to support them in developing online programs to assist overseas pharmacists understand the Australian healthcare system and integrate into Australian pharmacy practice.

## Overseas pharmacist candidates

APC is a skilled migration assessing authority approved by the Australian Government. We are proud to support the transition of overseas pharmacists from diverse backgrounds to practise in Australia and contribute to the Australian pharmacy workforce.

Australia remains a very attractive country for pharmacists to wish to migrate to. The journey includes several routes, depending on where our overseas trained pharmacists originate, and can take a prospective candidate months to several years depending on their circumstances.

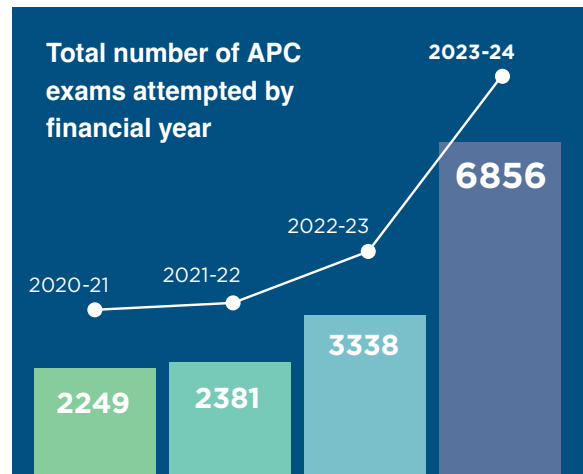
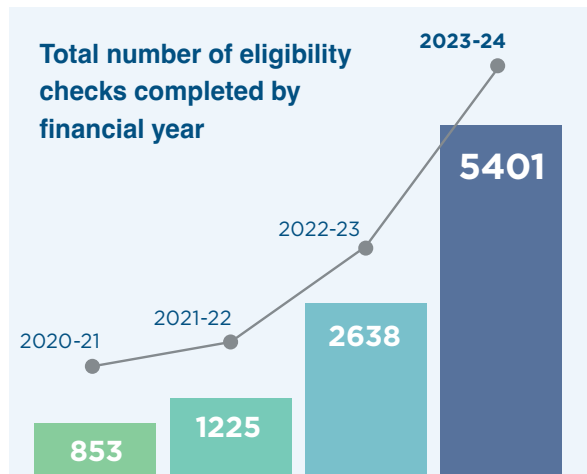
This diagram shows the two main routes that are taken.



## All pharmacist candidates

This year we saw a 105% increase in applications for the first step in the journey, and a 105% increase in those sitting our examinations. The examinations include those sitting the Intern Written Examination.

105% ↑



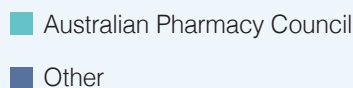
## Commonwealth Migration Incentive Scheme

The federal government commenced a program in late 2021 for eligible skilled migrants in certain occupations to access free skills assessments. We participated in both Pilot 1 and 2 for overseas-trained pharmacists to support the needs of the Australian pharmacist workforce. The program was further extended for 12 months and ended in February 2024. The initiatives offered free, fast-tracked, skills assessments in their relevant occupation. More than 150 candidates met the

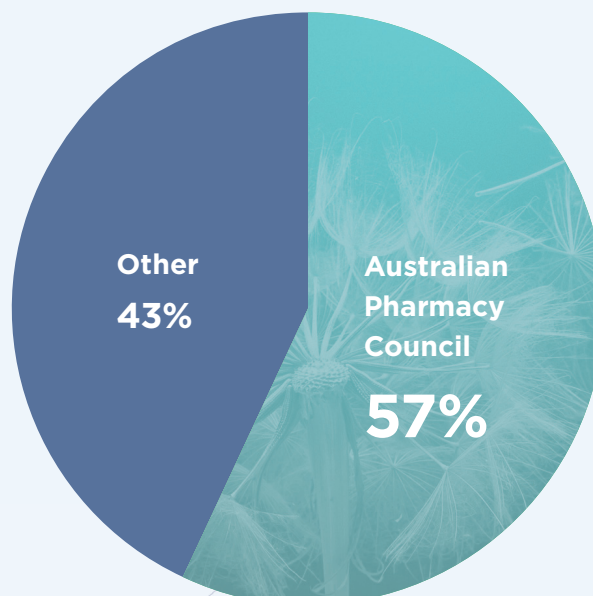
government's eligibility criteria and were able to receive a free eligibility check and/or exam sitting. APC actively participated in the Pilot 2 program and was a standout, representing 57% of all pilot scheme participants across all professions in the program. This, in turn, supported overseas pharmacists, despite the pilot overall not generating the demand the government expected.

Our systems and processes facilitated our collaboration with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), which was well regarded and highly successful for our profession.

### Pilot 2 participants by Assessing Authority (% eligible applications submitted for assessment)\*



\*Source: Skills Assessment Pilots Evaluation: Final Evaluation Report, Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, June 2024





## Candidate Choice

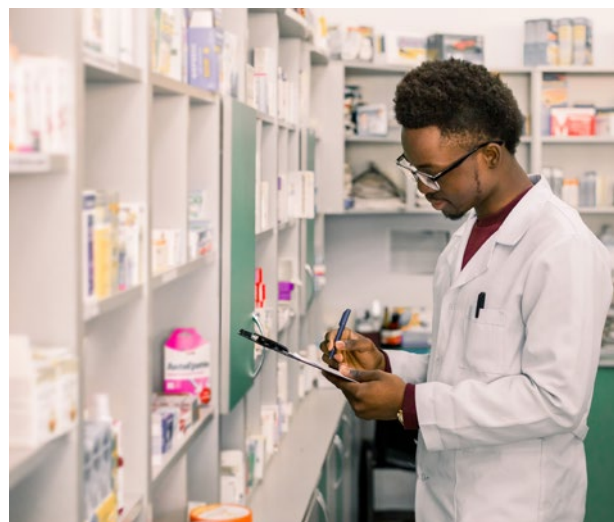
To improve candidate experience, we undertook an initiative to deliver greater choice for candidates in what and when they need our services. At APC, we are guided by our values of support, innovation, creativity, transparency and fairness. This initiative strived to provide an enhanced candidate experience that will strengthen the APC's commitment to these core values.

Phase 1 provided a diversified revenue model to ease the upfront costs that impact candidates. This now gives our candidates the choice to select when they purchase and commit to the various components of their journey with APC, allowing them to progress at a pace that suits them. This also reduced the substantial upfront cost that may otherwise be considered a deterrent to entry. Candidates now pay for each service they need, when they need it.

**This allowed us to reduce the upfront fee by almost 40%.**

Phase 2 of the project focused on streamlining the verification process. Our priority is always to maintain rigor and quality assurance, but efficiently and effectively. By improving the administrative and technical functionality of the verification process, we aim to provide an enhanced user-friendly experience, whilst also adhering to the thorough and established requirements of a Skills Assessment.

The next phase looks at incorporating new features through the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Uplift project, which will be completed within 18 months with the goal of operational efficiency and process improvement.



## Enquiries from candidates

As we continue to see a shift towards electronic communication channels, we have evolved our team and resources to provide more support to candidates. Emails to the team have increased by 57% from last year and phone calls have decreased by 47%.



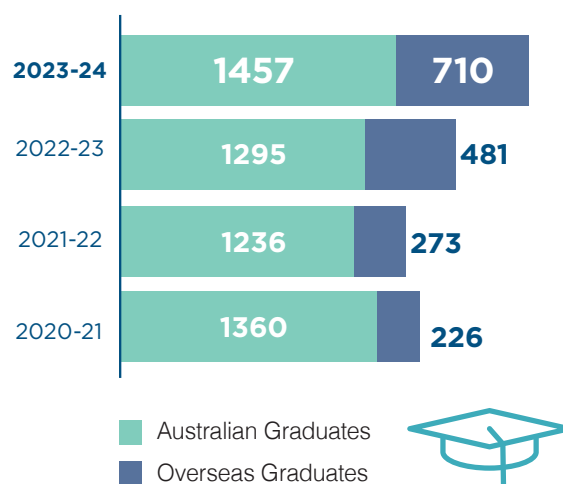
Phone calls reduced by **47%** ↓



Emails increased by **57%** ↑

## Internships – Final steps to General Registration

There has been a marked increase in the Intern Written examination, the exam that APC delivers as part of the Pharmacy Board of Australia requirements for general registration. Overseas pharmacists sit this exam towards the end of their provisional registration year as they complete their Intern Training Program. This indicates an increase in new pharmacists available for the workforce. Whilst there is a clear lag effect of the increases in the overseas demand due to migration and sponsorship processes, we still witnessed an increase of 22% over the last financial year, with a marked increase from overseas graduates. This results in increases in the generally registered pharmacists available to the Australian workforce.



## 2023-24 OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE

We completed

**5,401**

**Eligibility Check  
applications  
for Skills  
Assessments**



A total of

**6856**

**candidates  
attempted an  
APC exam**



From

**72**

**different  
countries**



In response to demand, we worked  
with our exam partners to provide

**13**

**new test  
centres**



We undertook

**45**

**Desktop Audit Applications  
on behalf of the Council  
on Chiropractic Education  
Australasia**

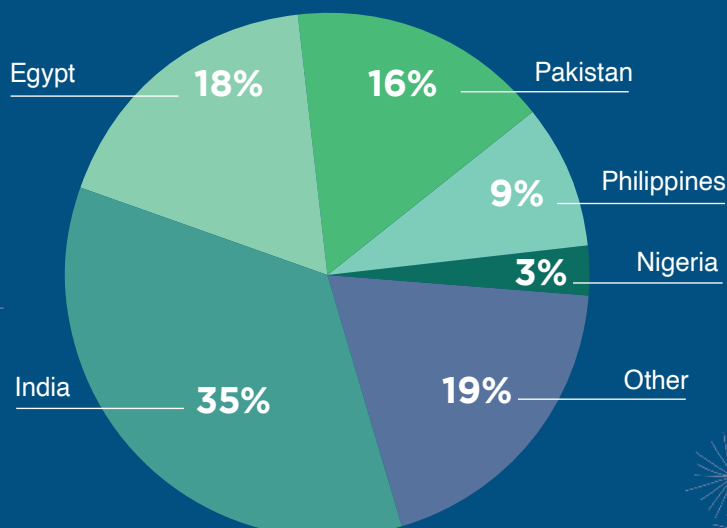
3 CANADA

10 UNITED  
STATES OF  
AMERICA

## COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

The overseas-trained pharmacists wishing to practise in Australia come from around the globe.

The top 5 countries in which pharmacists receive their qualifications are India, Egypt, Pakistan, Philippines, and Nigeria, who joined the top 5 this year. We also saw an increase from South Africa and Iran, whilst there was a small decrease from the United Kingdom.



# CANDIDATE LOCATIONS

Applications in 2023/24 were received from candidates from 72 countries.



In addition, single candidates applied for assessment to Australia from these countries:

Armenia	Libya
Bahrain	Macedonia, Republic of
Belarus	Mexico
Costa Rica	Oman
France	Peru
Hong Kong	Serbia, Republic of
Hungary	Swaziland
Israel	Sweden
Kuwait	Venezuela

And two candidates from these countries:

Algeria	Saudi arabia
Argentina	Tunisia
Chile	Turkey
Colombia	Ukraine
Germany	Yemen
Nambia	
Palestinian territory, occupied	
Poland	
Singapore	

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' health

The background of the entire page is a solid reddish-orange color. Scattered across this background are numerous stylized, white line-art illustrations of dandelion seed heads. Some are full and fluffy, while others are shown as seeds drifting away on thin stems. The seed heads are of varying sizes and are distributed across the page, with a higher concentration in the lower half.

We commit to a health system free of racism and discrimination by contributing to a culturally safe pharmacy workforce.





## THE LEADERS IN INDIGENOUS PHARMACY PROFESSION EDUCATION NETWORK

The Leaders in Indigenous Pharmacy Profession Education (*LIPPE™*) Network aims to strengthen pharmacy workforce capability to deliver culturally safe care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through collaborative efforts to embed Indigenous knowledge, expertise and ways of knowing, being, and doing into western style pharmacy education.

The *LIPPE™* Network is a partnership between the Australian Pharmacy Council and the Council of Pharmacy Schools Australia and New Zealand (CPS). Launched in May 2023, *LIPPE™* sits under the leadership of our Indigenous Health Strategy Group, led by Professor Faye McMillan.

We are delighted to have made advancements in embedding cultural safety into pharmacist education through several key activities this year, including:

### Delivering the first ever *LIPPE™* workshop

We supported our *LIPPE™* family to deliver the workshop 'Beyond Teaching About...' in Meeanjin (Brisbane) on 21st of May 2024. The workshop was underpinned by the *LIPPE™* principle of amplifying Indigenous voices and leadership and the role of allies as support.

The workshop was facilitated by four members of the *LIPPE™* Steering Committee, Chastina Heck, Dr Jared Miles, Professor Debra Rowett and Lloyd Dolan.

The workshop was well attended with 43 participants representing 12 universities across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, as well as five pharmacy organisations and networks, and members of the *LIPPE™* Steering Committee.

The workshop provided a safe and positive space to share ideas on how to move 'beyond teaching about' to 'teaching with' First Nations people. It enabled pharmacist educators to share ideas, experiences and resources to develop Indigenous curriculum content and to influence change in pharmacist education.

The conversations included:

- Understanding the importance of *why* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' perspectives should be incorporated into the development of curriculum.
- Exploring the strengths-based approach and moving away from the deficit-based discourse that frames the First Nations people's material for curriculum.
- Incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing.
- Adopting a holistic approach.
- Identifying and sharing available supports, resources, services, and links to networks.



“What I see as really important is to make sure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pharmacy students see themselves in course

content so that they have a sense of belonging. It's really important how we reference and talk about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the course content. We want to be celebrating strengths.

I think that's absolutely essential to have more pharmacy graduates delivering culturally safe care.”

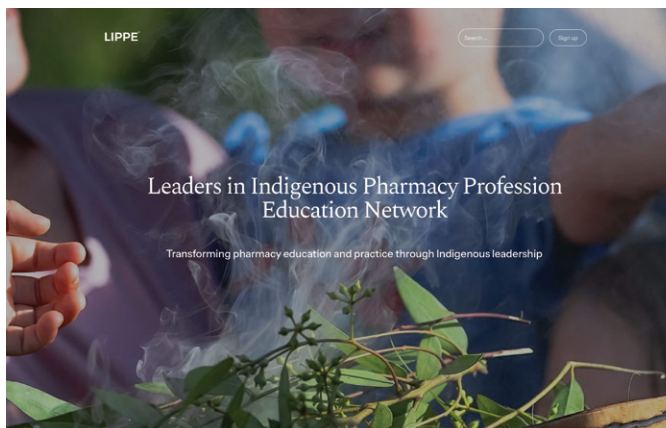
*Chastina Heck, Nywaigi, Mamu, Bidjara woman, APC Indigenous Health Strategy Group member*

## Launch of the LIPPE™ website

We are proud to have launched the new LIPPE™ website as part of our ongoing commitment to cultural safety in pharmacy education.

The website serves as a platform for pharmacy educators to explore learning resources aimed at embedding Indigenous knowledge, expertise, and ways of knowing and being into the Western-style pharmacy education and training.

[Visit the LIPPE™ website](#)



## Supporting Indigenous led research

Our overall LIPPE™ goal is to transform pharmacy education and professional practice through Indigenous leadership and we are proud to have supported Indigenous-led research.

Alex Burke is a Wiradjuri pharmacist who is currently undertaking a PhD at The University of Sydney. Alex's work **'Exploring First Nations' and Cultural Safety Content of Pharmacy Curricula with Academics in Australia'** was published in October 2023 in the American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education. The study explored academics' views on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health and Cultural Safety content in pharmacy school curricula to inform recommendations for future curricula.

[Read research article](#)

“ I wanted to understand barriers and I wanted to be able to say that all pharmacy school cultural safety content was developed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ”



Alex Burke  
Wiradjuri pharmacist

## Growing the LIPPE™ family

The LIPPE™ Network is a dynamic and growing community who are committed to making a difference through the work that pharmacists do. We invite you to join the 238 Indigenous and ally members of the Network to receive news on our progress, be invited to participate in events, and to share your knowledge and expertise.

[Become part of the LIPPE™ family](#)







## IPE COLLOQUIUM™ 2024: WINHANGARRA

**This one-day event from APC aims to facilitate cross-disciplinary dialogue among health profession educators, policy makers, and students to discuss how we can shape the next generation of healthcare professionals through education and assessment.**

The Interprofessional Colloquium 2024 embraced the theme '*Winhangarra: Listen, Hear, Think*', which was centred on the critical need to listen to First Nations voices and integrate their knowledge into health profession education and practice.

We remain committed to listening to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, so that decisions that affect them are led by them. This year, the referendum placed this topic under a national microscope, which was incredibly difficult for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Despite the outcome, we remain steadfast in honouring Winhangarra.

By doing so, we can collectively aim for transformational change in health profession education – and disrupt it in such a way that broadens thinking beyond the accepted systems.

The 2024 *IPE Colloquium™* program brought First Nations leaders from across the health professions together to cover topics such as co-design, Indigenising curriculum, cultural safety, and how professions can work together to achieve this.

Anna Tiatia Faátoese Latu and Lloyd Dolan, members of the Leaders in Indigenous Pharmacy Profession Education (*LIPPE™*) Network and Indigenous Health Strategy Group (IHSG), facilitated the day of conversation for over 140 delegates. This represents the highest number of face-to-face attendees since 2015.

The day's rich conversations were driven by the power of storytelling and sharing experiences, highlighting the importance of *listening*, *hearing*, and *thinking* to improve cultural safety in healthcare.

## Key themes and commitments

### Fostering a united approach was a key theme.

Creating authentic relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and health services is vital. Panellists spoke about the benefits of co-design of Indigenous content, explaining that their insights, advice, stories and experiences can be an integral part of building meaningful educational content that truly reflects Indigenous perspectives and experiences.

Panellists called for First Nations educational content and case studies to be shared across universities, across professions, and for everyone to work together towards progress.

They advised to look outside the profession when hiring for roles that lead Indigenous work and to hire people to light fires beneath others.

There was an emphasis on introducing new ways of learning First Nations content and reengineering assessment, such as the use of yarning circles, and supporting Indigenous students through creating inclusive environments.

As an accreditation authority, these conversations feed into our commitment to a health system free of racism and discrimination by contributing to a culturally safe pharmacy workforce.







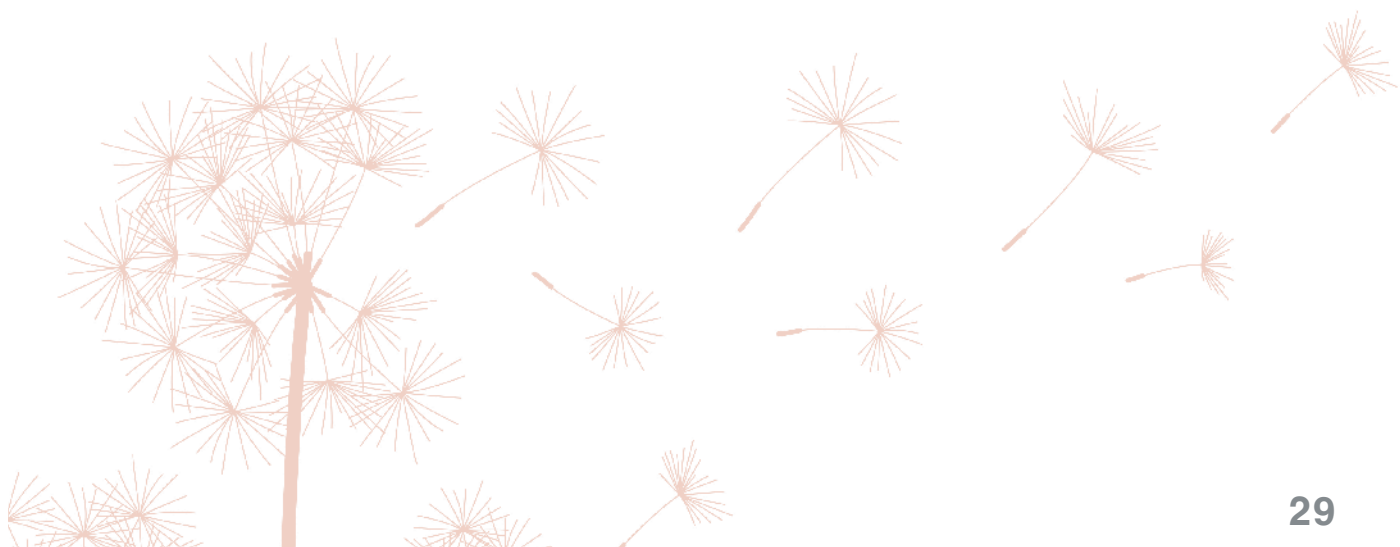
## GROWING OUR PEOPLES' UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURAL SAFETY

**Aligning with our commitment to fostering culturally safe environments, we continued our engagement with Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) cultural safety training.**

All staff complete this on induction into our organisation. This has enabled our staff to better understand our shared history and address the needs of Indigenous communities.

Our staff also participated in Thunderstone Aboriginal Cultural Services' Ngunnawal language workshop

and Mt Majura Indigenous medicines tour, deepening our understanding of local knowledges and Indigenous medicines. Our team now regularly open meetings with an Acknowledgement of Country in Ngunnawal language.



# An innovative, sustainable and resilient organisation



We embrace new ways of working that move  
us forward.

## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**We are dedicated to embedding social responsibility into our work. A priority for us is to ensure the safety of others and the environment, and that this is placed above all else. We believe in not merely avoiding harm, but also in doing good.**

In promoting diversity and inclusion, APC remains a proud member of the Pride in Diversity program. This reflects our ongoing efforts to support LGBTIQ+ inclusion, ensuring a safe and respectful workplace for all.

Sustainability is a key priority in our operations. We are particularly proud to share that our new office is a 100% electric plant, contributing to APC's commitment to supporting carbon neutrality. It is equipped with high-

quality video conferencing that enables connections whilst limiting our carbon footprint.

Additionally, we continue our commitment to the ACT Smart Accredited recycling program, helping to manage our waste responsibly and reduce our environmental footprint.

Through these initiatives, APC upholds its values of respect, fairness and courage, ensuring that our work positively impacts the communities we serve.



## FOSTERING AND SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

**Our people are our most valuable asset. Supporting them to thrive and grow in a safe and inclusive environment is a top priority. Our organisation culture is strong, and our values are not just written down, but lived.**

Investment in our people is key for us and something we prioritise. We offer professional development opportunities that align with both individual and collective needs, and we have reviewed and strengthened our HR policies to further support staff.

Our regular Canberra Connection Days allow for all staff to be together to collaborate and learn from each other,

regardless of where their primary place of work may be. We take time to share and celebrate successes as a key part of these.

This year, we revisited our values in a full-day workshop, where staff put into action what the values of the organisation mean to them. Our "work with us" video is testament to how staff live these every day.





## IT AND DATA SECURITY

**Our technology focus remains on improving digital user experiences through ongoing modernisation of our IT platforms and systems to drive efficiency, introducing innovation, and increasing our cybersecurity, digital trust and threat intelligence capabilities.**

Over the past year, new state of the art Audio Visual (AV) and virtual facilities have been deployed to support collaboration and communication between APC's workforce, Subject Matter Experts (SME) and industry. This included ensuring sustainability with redundant IT equipment to be sent to specialist IT recycling facilities for recycling and re-use, or where possible, donated to worthwhile local not-for-profit (NFP) institutions.

Working with our trusted supply chain of service providers we have undertaken significant steps in strengthening cyber security monitoring. As we grow, we continue to improve threat identification, access control and vulnerability triage by expanding on our security technical tools and reporting.

We have streamlined our service management operations, commenced new systems development and introduced emerging technologies, i.e. Artificial Intelligence (AI), across our infrastructure and mission-critical systems such as our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

We continue to progress digital projects, such as an Accreditation Management System (AMS) and incorporation of finance management capability and

integration with our CRM. This includes the planning of a Data Management Strategy that will inform technical architecture and data management with how data will be stored, accessed, owned, with a focus on a 'single truth, single source' approach.

Complementing our investment in IT modernisation is our need for best practice governance. The new System Development Framework (SDF) has improved technical quality assurance between internal teams and external service providers. Furthermore, an AI Platform and Technologies Use Guide was launched to provide APC staff with guidelines and risk management techniques in the use of AI technologies for APC operational and business purposes.

Looking ahead, the APC will continue to develop on the work undertaken to improve and innovate our use of technologies, data, security and reporting for candidates, industry, APC staff and external stakeholders. This will be further enhanced as we investigate digital transformation opportunities and generate new technical capability with the planned opening of the APC IT Innovations Lab.



## GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIALS

Recent years have provided temporary windfall financial gains from an extraordinary growth in demand for services that exceeded the additional resources we have been able to stand up in response.

The gap between external demand and availability of internal resources further compounded the financial outcome. Despite the added pressure this has placed on our systems and personnel, we have risen to that challenge and at the same time commenced several reforms. In the short term, this has provided APC with an unplanned net surplus of operations, primarily derived from increased overseas candidate demand.

We are not-for-profit, and we are required to reinvest back into our business. Emerging from the pandemic impacts after a low base in terms of long-term financial stability has created capacity to invest in our systems and processes. We are maximising the benefits of digital transformation to enhance efficient operations, and further build a resilient and robust operating environment. This ensures that our services can be delivered at the highest quality, at the most efficient price, over the longer term.

We are also cognisant that this is not a permanent operating level, and demand is already normalising, which presents challenges when price setting. Despite this, we continue to make deliberate shifts through our Candidate Choice Project to reduce the upfront fees for overseas applicants, enhance candidate support and engagement, and ensure credits for eligible candidates.

### Our Board and Committees

We are backed by an incredible Board of Directors. Their dedication to our work assures quality in pharmacy education. They draw experience from pharmacy, education, other health professions, business and the community.

#### Operational and advisory committees provide expertise and advice:

- **Finance, Audit and Risk Monitoring Committee** – watches and manages compliance risk
- **Accreditation Committee** – decides on accreditation and consults on examination issues
- **Examinations Committee** – keeps our exams relevant and fair
- **Indigenous Health Strategy Group** – provides advice on how to best contribute to improving Indigenous health

#### Our leadership team:

We have an extraordinary team of Leaders who work to drive innovative and passionate teams to advance pharmacy education for all Australians whilst embedding the values that APC stand for and all that we do. We encourage a culture of creativity, transparency resilience and respect which has enabled us as an organisation to foster an environment of collaborative teamwork and professional integrity.

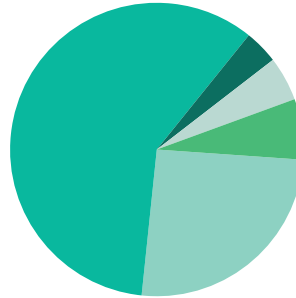
# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

as at 30 June 2024

## Income

Assessments	\$5,194,990
Examinations	\$12,028,522
Accreditation	\$761,323
Grants and Govt. incentives	\$994,241
Other	\$1,359,712

**\$20,338,788**

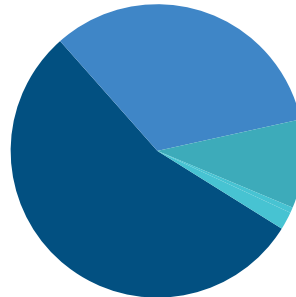


Assessments	25%
Examinations	59%
Accreditation	4%
Grants and Govt. incentives	5%
Other	7%

## Expenses

Employee benefits	\$5,720,458
Services and contracts	\$3,467,772
Supplier costs	\$1,023,601
Other	\$270,180

**\$10,482,011**

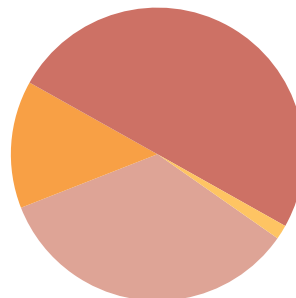


Employee benefits	54%
Services and contracts	33%
Supplier costs	10%
Other	3%

## Assets

Cash	\$10,197,778
Property, equipment, office	\$4,182,143
Investments	\$14,858,266
Other	\$469,549

**\$29,707,736**

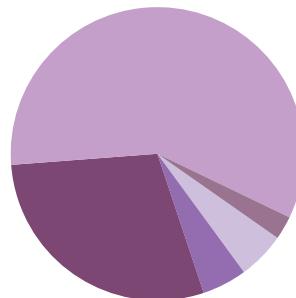


Cash	34%
Property, equipment, office	14%
Investments	50%
Other	2%

## Liabilities

Creditors	\$504,896
Employee provisions	\$477,875
Lease liability	\$2,796,576
Contract liabilities	\$5,643,299
Provisions	\$250,000

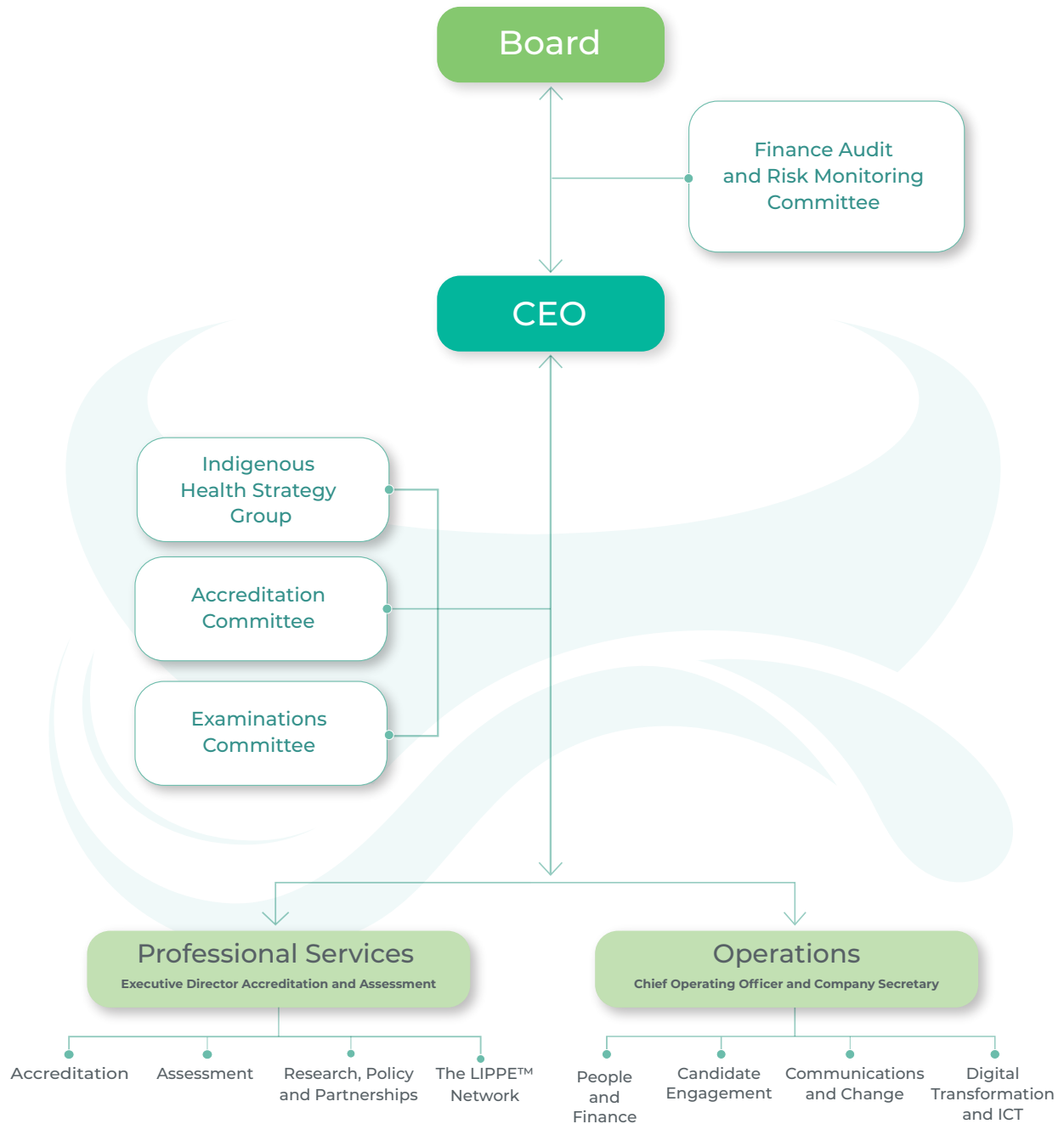
**\$9,672,646**



Creditors	5%
Employee provisions	5%
Lease liability	29%
Contract liabilities	58%
Provisions	3%



# ORGANISATIONAL CHART





australian<sup>®</sup>  
pharmacy  
council

**Australian Pharmacy Council**

**T1 Level 2, 6 Brindabella Circuit South**

**Brindabella Business Park**

**Canberra Airport ACT 2609**

**p +61 2 6188 4288 | [www.pharmacycouncil.org.au](http://www.pharmacycouncil.org.au)**

