



2026 Community Pharmacy Industry Insights Report

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The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia

Introduction

As the nation's most accessible health destination, Australia's more than 6,000 community pharmacies play a broader role than ever, supporting patients with medicines management, vaccinations, the treatment of everyday acute and long-term health conditions and a range of other health and wellbeing services.

In 2025, Australians spent approximately \$12.5 billion in pharmacies.¹ This level of engagement underscores the enduring trust patients place in their local pharmacy and highlights the sector's critical role in meeting day-to-day healthcare needs.

Patient expectations are shifting rapidly, shaped by pressures across the wider health system. In response, community pharmacies are expanding their service offering, investing in consultation spaces, upgrading digital capabilities, and upskilling their teams to deliver an increased range of everyday health services.

Reform across all jurisdictions continues to accelerate this shift. State based prescribing initiatives and scope of practice reforms are enabling pharmacists to deliver more care within their full training and expertise.

The Guild has a goal for 80% of community pharmacists to be qualified to prescribe by 2035 and 80% of community pharmacies delivering full scope of practice services by 2035.

This Industry Insights Report draws on new data from Westpac Group and The Pharmacy Guild of Australia to explore these shifts in detail - tracking in-pharmacy spend trends, examining how community pharmacies are responding to evolving patient needs, and analysing how cheaper medicines are improving outcomes for Australians.

Together, these insights demonstrate how community pharmacies are seizing emerging opportunities and undergoing significant transformation in the pursuit of creating healthier communities.

¹ Westpac DataX, 2026



01 Australia's most accessible healthcare destination

There are more than 6,000 community pharmacies across Australia.¹

On average, Australians visited a pharmacy 18 times in 2024. In total there are 440 million community pharmacy visits annually.²

With extended operating hours and vast geographic coverage, pharmacies are the most accessible health destination in Australia.

96% of Australians in capital cities and 74% of Australians outside of capital cities have access to at least one community pharmacy within a 2.5 km radius.³

¹ Department of Health, Disability & Ageing, 2025

² Guild Digest, 2025

³ Macroplan, 2023



02 In-person visits driving pharmacy spend

In 2025, Australians spent more than \$12.5 billion at pharmacies, accounting for approximately one-quarter of all out-of-pocket health spending.⁴

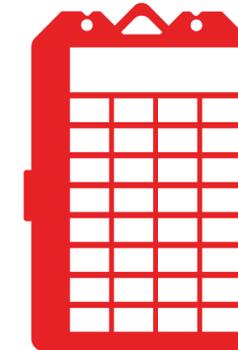
Visiting a pharmacy remains preferred, with online pharmacy sales accounting for just 11.6% of total pharmacy spend in 2025.⁴

The average online transaction value fell by 10.3% over 2024-2025.⁴

⁴ Westpac DataX, 2026

03 Healthcare in action

On average, a community pharmacy fills 66,478 prescriptions annually. As a sector, more than 390 million scripts were filled in the 2023-24 financial year.⁵



In 2024, 17.1 million dose administration aids helped patients continue living independently.⁵

Services including vaccination, MedsCheck, blood pressure monitoring and local home delivery are already provided by more than half of all pharmacies.

A growing number are providing other services, such as diagnosis and treatment for urinary tract infection, and hormonal contraception initiation, as states and territories authorise qualified pharmacists to conduct these services.

⁵ Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, 2025



04 The vital role of regional pharmacies

In 2025, there were 376 Australian towns or suburbs where community pharmacy was the only front-line health service.⁶

Regional pharmacies account for 23% of Australia's 6,000 community pharmacies, despite 27% of Australians living outside major cities.⁷ This means regional, rural and remote areas have proportionally fewer pharmacies relative to their population, making each pharmacy even more critical to local access and continuity of care.

The average transaction value in regional pharmacies was \$49.75 in 2025, up from \$46.11 in 2024.⁸ These pharmacies also saw higher growth in spend than in metro areas over 2024-2025, at 9.7%.⁸

These figures highlight the important role regional pharmacies play as trusted, accessible health hubs, sometimes serving as the sole point of care in their communities.

⁶ Guild analysis, 2025

⁷ Profile of Australia's population - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2024

⁸ Westpac DataX, 2026

Creating healthier communities

+ Pharmacies delivering more for patients

Pharmacist-led services for everyday and long-term health conditions continue to accelerate. Queensland is leading the way as prescribing services transition to business as usual, and all other states and territories are following. For example, the management of uncomplicated UTIs in pharmacy is now harmonised across the country. During 2025, community pharmacy delivered more than 80,500 consultations for the diagnosis and treatment of non-complex UTIs.¹

Research by the Pharmacy Guild shows 8 in 10 Australians are aware that community pharmacists are doing more for patients and 89% of Australians support pharmacists being able to deliver a wider range of service for common everyday health conditions.²

+ More affordable medicine = less tough choices

From 1 January 2026, Australians have paid no more than \$25 for PBS subsidised medicines – the lowest price in two decades. This creates a saving of \$6.60 per script compared with 2025, while concessional patients continue to pay \$7.70. It marks only the second reduction in the general copayment, following the first cut to \$30 in 2023.

Without these cuts, PBS prices would have reached \$50 today.

The reform comes as cost-of-living pressures drive 1 in 5 Australians, and 1 in 3 in regional areas, to delay or forgo medicines.²

In total, 20 million Australians³ will benefit from the co-payment reduction. With 400,000 prescriptions each week dropping to \$25, patients are expected to save \$784.6 million over four years, while also benefiting from improved medication adherence, fewer complications, and reduced pressure on the wider health system.⁴

¹MedAdvisor, 2025

²Track 5 Insightfully research, November 2025

³Patients Australia, 2026

⁴Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, 2026

+ Community Pharmacy: Adapting, diversifying and thriving

Community pharmacy continues to demonstrate strong sustainability and operational resilience, underpinned by stable revenue and an expanding mix of services.

With average annual sales of \$4.2 million per pharmacy in 2023-24, the sector maintains a solid foundation, driven by prescription medicines, which account for about 66.5% of total revenue.¹ The remaining 33.5% comes from pharmacy professional services and programs, pharmacy medicines, pharmacist-only medicines and over-the-counter products.¹

In 2023-24 operating expenses (excluding cost of goods sold) remained steady at 23.5% of turnover, reflecting disciplined financial management.¹

At the same time, pharmacies are proactively strengthening their sustainability by expanding clinical services and forging new partnerships that deepen their role in the broader health system.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President Professor Trent Twomey said community pharmacies continued to prove themselves as one of the most resilient and future ready parts of Australia's health system.

¹ Guild Digest, 2025

“Our stable revenue base - supported by sustained prescription volumes and a growing mix of new professional services for everyday and long-term health conditions - shows community pharmacies are not only maintaining their foundations but actively evolving to meet community need.”

Westpac has observed rapid uptake of innovative service models, including aged care partnerships, the establishment of in-pharmacy consult rooms, onsite workplace vaccination programs, and increasing collaboration with allied health providers to deliver more integrated care. These shifts not only broaden revenue sources but also embed community pharmacy more firmly within the fabric of primary healthcare.

According to Belinda Hegarty, Westpac's National General Manager Healthcare & Professional Services, **“we continue to see strong growth across the sector nationally, supported by increased scope of service as communities continue to rely on their local pharmacist to assist them in delivering strong health outcomes.”**



Trent Twomey
National President
Pharmacy Guild Australia



Belinda Hegarty
National General Manager
Healthcare & Professional
Services, Westpac



Westpac Customer Case Study:

Redefining Community Pharmacy with Complete Care

Community pharmacist and pharmacy owner Kristina Fox is reimagining community pharmacy with Complete Care. Driven by a vision to modernise pharmacy, and inspired by her own deeply personal experiences caring for her children, the brand transforms pharmacy to deliver more holistic care and enhance patient experience through pharmacy store design, roles and responsibilities and technological integration.

The belief was that a patient centric model and better patient care would lead to better business results, which has proven true with significant improvements in gross profit and professional services revenue, all while maintaining the same staffing levels.

Launched at a pharmacy in Rosny Park, Hobart in 2023, Complete Care has quickly expanded to 11 pharmacies across Australia, with more to open soon, and was awarded 2025 Pharmacy of the Year.

“Care Starts Here”

The Complete Care model redesigns the physical layout of pharmacies to prioritise an efficient and discreet dispensing experience. Upon entering the pharmacy, patients digitally check-in, are triaged, and placed in a queue, with a virtual basket created for them. Where a consultation with a pharmacist is required,

the patient is directed to a private pod where they can discuss their medication or queries with the pharmacist, with automated dispensing directly to the pod.

“At Complete Care, we recognise that discussing sensitive diagnoses in an open, public setting can be confronting for many patients. Since introducing pharmacist consult pods, we’ve seen how much patients value the privacy and comfort they provide, and it’s allowed for more meaningful conversations with our pharmacists and improved health outcomes”. – Kristina Fox

The new operating model is supported by a bespoke software Excipient, which integrates with dispensing software to seamlessly manage prescriptions, clinical care, and workflow. The software’s functionality is continuously enhanced, with direct patient messaging which includes follow up on health concerns recently introduced.

At Complete Care, traditional roles are redefined with a strong focus on upskilling - regular dispensing is handled by dispensing technicians, freeing up pharmacists to focus on clinical care at their full scope of practice. This has enabled rapid growth in script and sales volumes without increasing headcount.





With a range of specialised services and on-site consult rooms for allied health professionals and nurse practitioners, Complete Care is delivering just that - a holistic model of care to meet community needs.

“We believe Community Pharmacies are uniquely positioned to operate as local health hubs. Complete Care acts as a true health hub delivering specialised services spanning allied health, nurse practitioners, and targeted NDIS and aged care support. This is particularly important for our pharmacies in regional areas, where access to affordable and timely care is a key challenge.” – Kristina Fox

Reflecting on the journey so far, Kristina credits the success of Complete Care to a clear vision, a committed team, and a strong support network, especially from her family, that has allowed her to bring the model to life. The transformation required to implement the Complete Care model is extensive and complex, making the

involvement of experienced partners essential to navigating the change effectively. Access to experienced banking support has helped ensure financial decisions keep pace with the clinical and operational shifts underway.

“Having a relationship with a banker who understands my business and who I can call directly at any time that I need support is amazing. If you’re acquiring, converting or looking to expand, partnering with Westpac helps make the process easier and smooth. They believe in the Complete Care model and have supported me through this journey.” – Kristina Fox

The Complete Care model’s success has attracted interest from individual pharmacies and established pharmacy groups, with pilot programs underway. Kristina encourages pharmacists to adopt models that strengthen their contributions to the health and wellbeing of their communities.



Westpac Insights

At Westpac, our health specialist bankers work closely with pharmacy owners every day, providing tailored funding solutions that support growth and innovation. Westpac's partnership with the Pharmacy Guild provides deep industry insights, enabling bankers to shape support that is genuinely aligned to the needs and ambitions of community pharmacies. Tips from Westpac bankers for pharmacists considering funding:

Be supported by industry specialists

— With dedicated healthcare bankers in both Metro and Regional areas, and over 700 pharmacy customers, Westpac has the experience to offer local expert advice to help you plan your next move.

Come early to the conversation

— Engaging with your bank early allows banks to work with you on the right timing and solutions to meet your needs. Banks have specific products and services tailored to pharmacy and will give you choices depending on your unique situation.

Look beyond the numbers

— Lenders assess more than financials, also looking at your unique business, long-term aspirations, and experiences in the sector. It's important to speak to your bankers so the true vision of your business can be seen.

If you'd like to connect with a Westpac health specialist banker visit:

<https://www.westpac.com.au/business-banking/industries/enquiry/>