What are the industry/industries and ANZSCO occupation/s that you or your organisation represents for the purposes of this submission?

Industry
Health Care and Social Assistance

Occupation
The three dropdowns below accord with the ABS ANZSCO classification of occupations. Selections are required at the ‘Occupation Group’ 2-digit level and at the ‘Occupation Unit (4-digit)’ level, but can also be made down to the Occupation (6-digit) level depending on the occupation/s to which your submission relates.

Additional occupations can be selected by way of the ‘Add item’ button.

For each occupation selected, please indicate whether your advice is to Include, Exclude, or is Neutral (other) with respect to the 2015-16 SOL. The rest of the form can be used to provide evidence/reasons to support your recommendations. Attachments can also be added after clicking the 'Submit' button.

Item 1
Are there any occupations that you represent where there is evidence of imbalances in the demand for and supply of skills in the medium-to-long term? *

Members of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia (the Guild) have reported no issues in securing the employment of a pharmacist in major centres of Australia during 2014. Internal modelling conducted by the Guild (November 2014) also suggests that there will be a full-time equivalent oversupply of 4,088 pharmacists in 2015. The situation gets progressively worse into the future with a full-time equivalent oversupply in 2020 of 4,637 pharmacists and 2025 of 6,988 pharmacists.

The Department of Employment national labour market rating for pharmacists (as at February 2013) was ‘no shortage’. It was noted that despite consistent shortages in the decade to 2008, the labour market for pharmacists has eased, and in 2012 almost 90 per cent of advertised vacancies were filled (compared with 60 per cent in 2008). (Source: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations ‘Skilled Occupations Summary 2515 Pharmacists’ May 2013). Labour market ratings produced separately for states and territories varied, with pharmacists rated as ‘no shortage’ in most areas, but rated as ‘regional recruitment difficulty’ for NSW (as at April 2014) and ‘regional recruitment difficulty’ for Victoria (as at February 2014).

The number of applicants per vacancy varied across the jurisdictions but on average, nationally, there were 7.5 applicants per vacancy. The state/area attracting the largest number of applicants was Queensland metropolitan – 31.1 applicants per vacancy. However, in Tasmania, NSW and Victoria there were recruitment difficulties in regional areas with relatively low numbers of applicants (Tasmania fewer than one person) per vacancy (Source: Department of Employment website http://docs.employment.gov.au/node/31521 2014).

Is there evidence of imbalances in the demand for and supply of skills in the medium-to-long term in non-metropolitan areas?

If so, can you indicate in what part of Australia and the number in the occupation in over or under-supply.

Yes. The Guild maintains that there is not a general undersupply of pharmacists, rather a mal-distribution between metropolitan and regional Australia. The Health Workforce Australia (HWA) March 2014 report confirmed that supply is meeting the demand across Australia, but there is significant anecdotal evidence of oversupply in regard to metropolitan areas (Source: HWA Australia’s Health Workforce Series – Pharmacists in Focus March 2014 http://www.hwa.gov.au/sites/default/files/HWA_Australia-Health-Workforce-Series_Pharmacists ).

Pharmacy Board of Australia (PharmBA) June 2014 data show that of the 28,282 general registered pharmacists in Australia, only 0.75% (212) are located in the Northern Territory, although this is an improvement on 2013 data of 0.71% (194). The variance in data for each state and territory from 2013 to 2014 was no more than a drop of 0.23% (Source: PharmBA ‘Pharmacy Registration Data: June 2014’ http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au/About/Statistics.aspx).

Are there any occupations which require formal licensing or registration arrangements in order to practice/perform in this occupation?

For example:

- Midwives are required to register with the nurses board in their state or territory
- Panelbeaters are required to be registered or certified with the state Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Authority

Pharmacists are required to register with the PharmBA in order to be nationally registered to practice pharmacy in any state or territory in Australia. Pharmacist graduates are required to complete 1,824 hours of supervised practice in accordance with the requirements set out in the PharmBA’s supervised practice arrangements to be eligible to apply for general registration.
Supervised practice is undertaking pharmacy practice under the direct supervision of a pharmacist who holds general registration (a preceptor), while the pharmacist is providing pharmacy services in pharmacy premises or other circumstances as determined by the PharmBA. Interns must be registered by the PharmBA to undertake the period of supervised practice required for initial general registration. (Source: http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au/)

Is it expected that your employment sector will be impacted by any medium-to-long term trends which will impact upon demand and/or supply (excluding costs associated with training, labour hire, and international sponsorship)? Please provide evidence (e.g. data source, policy document) which substantiates these claims.

For example:
- New benchmarks for childcare centres mandate increased staff-to-child ratios and higher qualification standards for childcare workers.

Yes. The Guild believes that the current system is still not resourced adequately to support rural and remote intern pharmacy placements due to the limited financial support for undergraduates and internships. This impacts on pharmacy graduates attempting to become eligible for registration as a pharmacist in rural locations, as there is already a difficulty in accessing workplaces due to costs and current incentives which are not attracting enough people to relocate permanently to rural locations.

In 2015 more than 1,700 pharmacy graduates will be seeking intern training positions. In addition, pharmacists seeking approval to conduct supervised practice are advised to undertake a preceptor training program as part of their preparation for the role. (Source: PBA ‘Preceptor Guide’ 28 October 2013 www.pharmacyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines).

Please provide any other information you consider relevant evidence to support your submission

For example, you may know of some independent studies about your occupation that supports your advice to us.

It is the Guild’s position that the occupation of Community (Retail) Pharmacist (ANZSCO: 251513) should not be reinstated on the Skilled Occupation List for 2015 following the decision for removal in 2014.
Would you like to make any additional comments on the SOL?

Because of the mal-distribution, it is essential that pharmacists remain listed on the Consolidated Sponsored Occupations List (CSOL) which applies to the Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS), State Sponsored Migration Scheme, Temporary Business Long Stay (457), and Occupational Trainee visa categories, should pharmacy proprietors identify a recruitment issue in regional, remote or low population growth areas of Australia to fill skilled vacancies in their businesses.

Please provide the name, position and contact details of a person within your organisation who is willing to be contacted if any further information or follow-up is required.

Name *
Khin Win May

Position *
National Manager Policy and Regulation

Contact details *
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All information, including name and address details, contained in submissions will be made available to the public on the Department of Industry website unless you indicate that you would like all or part of your submission to remain in confidence. Automatically generated confidentiality statements in emails do not suffice for this purpose. Respondents who would like all or part of their submission to remain in confidence should provide this information in an email to SOL@industry.gov.au. Legal requirements, such as those imposed by the Freedom of Information Act 1982, may affect the confidentiality of your submission.