

Media release

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‘A future defined by what we do, rather than where we work’: Tom Simpson elected SHPA President

Tom Simpson, 2018 Tasmanian Pharmacist of the Year and recipient of the 2019 SHPA Medal of Merit, was elected as President of the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) last night as the organisation’s 2022 Annual General Meeting capped a year of growth, consolidation and new frontiers.

Kate O’Hara was elected Vice President, Ramy Aziz was elected Treasurer and Olivia Rofe and Paul Firman were elected to the Board Executive.

Speaking after the handover, outgoing SHPA President and fellow Tasmanian Peter Fowler said Mr Simpson embodies the personal and professional attributes needed to advance pharmacy practice in Australia.

‘Tom’s broad skillset, creative strategy and ambition has taken hospital pharmacy practice in Tasmania to a point that was unimaginable only a handful of years ago. His exemplary work liaising with Federal and State government secretaries and ministers, professional organisations and advocacy groups has seen the state overcome barriers and ensure political and clinical support for significant expansion of pharmacy services, funding, and practice scope.

‘Under the guidance of Tom and the new Board of Directors, the many programs and supports SHPA has built for members and the profession will continue to prosper, while Hospital Pharmacy takes the lead on embedding expert pharmacists at the point of care.’

Mr Simpson paid tribute to Mr Fowler as a strong and steady hand at the wheel in a challenging time.

‘From a new strategic plan to pandemic preparedness in only 12 months, Peter placed connectedness and collegiality at the centre of his Presidency, and SHPA is emerging stronger and more assured as a result of his leadership.

‘Peter has helped define the character of the SHPA Member, who is committed to evidence-based practice on their professional journey, supported by innovative programs and national networks of like-minded practitioners.’

Mr Simpson said SHPA’s best days lie ahead, and committed to ensuring Australia’s future workforce pipeline is fit for the task of complex, interconnected care.

‘Hospital-based or hospital-informed training creates practitioners whose native habitat is multidisciplinary, collaborative care, surrounded by specialists and generalists from all healthcare professions.

'Entrenched nationwide over the last five years, SHPA Residencies provide the generalist and specialist knowledge to excel in emerging, onsite roles – particularly in aged care and GP practices – while ensuring greater pharmacist coverage and medicines safety in regional, rural and remote areas.

'By building broader understanding of complex clinical journeys – and formally recognising the underpinning skills and experience – we can work toward a future in which we are defined by what we can do, and the care we can provide, rather than where we work.'

Mr Simpson said recognising specialty expertise is the pathway to increasing all pharmacists' practicing autonomy – wherever their care setting – while building connections between like-minded communities to help grow clinical knowledge and impact.

'In this way, the advances made to ensure medicines safety and optimal outcomes for patients who have acute care touchpoints, can ripple outward to benefit those who don't.

'I look forward to building on Peter's legacy and advocating for reform such that excellence in medication management is fundamental to healthcare policy and funding, and all Australian pharmacists and technicians benefit from SHPA's insight and influence.'

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional organisation for the 6,100+ Hospital Pharmacists, and their Hospital Pharmacist Intern and Hospital Pharmacy Technician colleagues working across Australia's health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. Embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams and equipped with exceptional medicines management expertise, SHPA members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

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