

25 June 2026 - Media release

John Roberts elected as new Chair of the Pharmacy Council - Te Pou Whakamana Kaimatū o Aotearoa

John Roberts was elected as the new Pharmacy Council Chair in the June Council meeting this week, and Ben Oldfield was elected as Deputy Chair.

With a long history in the commercial sector, including as CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi in New Zealand and Asia Pacific and currently a director on several New Zealand boards, John brings a wealth of governance experience to the role of Chair. John was appointed to the Pharmacy Council as a lay member in August 2025 and is keen to get to work.

“I joined the Pharmacy Council primarily to contribute to the safety and well-being of New Zealanders. The pharmacy sector is primed for change to align with the government’s target of ‘the right care at the right time’ and I believe that my governance, strategic and collaborative skills will help the regulator and the sector achieve these outcomes,” says John.

John will be supported by Deputy Chair Ben Oldfield. Also appointed to the Pharmacy Council in August 2025, Ben is a New Zealand registered pharmacist and currently works as Head Pharmacist for New Zealand Clinical Research.

“The public need to know that any pharmacist they see, wherever they are in the country, is practising safely. Contributing to that is a privilege,” says Ben.

“I’ve seen pharmacy from several angles: leading a clinical research team working to international standards, and rural community pharmacy in Northland. That breadth gives me a strong sense of both what the profession is capable of and where the public is relying on us to get it right.”

Michael Pead, Pharmacy Council Chief Executive, welcomes John and Ben to their new roles.

“We welcome the fresh perspectives of the new Chair and Deputy Chair as we continue our work of ensuring regulation is fit for purpose and that pharmacists are practicing safely and competently. The Pharmacy Council believes that the profession can make a huge difference to New Zealanders through better health outcomes, and we are keen to support pharmacists achieve this,” he says.

The election of Chair and Deputy Chair is held at the beginning of each year and is a statutory requirement under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.

The Council has eight members made up of six pharmacists and two lay members. While Council members are appointed by the Minister of Health, Council members are responsible for electing the Chair and Deputy Chair positions from within Council.

- Ends -

More information on John Roberts, Ben Oldfield, and the rest of the Pharmacy Council can be found on the Council Members page of the [Pharmacy Council website](#)