



Australia

A composite image showing four smiling medical professionals (three women and one man) in white lab coats with stethoscopes, standing in a row. In the foreground, there are several orange and white pill bottles and spilled pills on a surface.

## The National Product Catalogue

The National Product Catalogue (NPC) is the product data communication solution for Australian public and private healthcare institutions seeking to deliver improved patient safety and realise significant efficiency gains.

Designed as a whole-of-industry registry of all products sold in the Australian healthcare sector, the NPC is 'the' single source of item master data for health institutions seeking to purchase medicines, medical devices and other necessary healthcare items. The objective of the NPC is to ensure better overall data integrity throughout the industry sector.

The ability to store and share accurate, complete and up-to-date data on healthcare products between suppliers and healthcare delivery organisations is a critical, foundational component for Australia's transition to an electronic health system. In the public sector this move is being driven by the National E-Health Transition Authority (NEHTA), on behalf of the Commonwealth, state and territory health departments.

NEHTA has worked closely with GS1 Australia to develop the NPC which is hosted on GS1net, GS1 Australia's supply chain data synchronisation service for Australia and New Zealand. In simple terms GS1net is a database of product specifications maintained by GS1 Australia on behalf of its members and their trading partners.

### Why accurate product data is important in Healthcare

In healthcare, like every industry, suppliers need to share product information with their trading partners to ensure the supply chain operates effectively and that their products reach consumers. Data recipients require product information from their suppliers to drive areas of their business such as new product introductions, warehousing, distribution and point-of-sale systems.

Accurate product data in healthcare is also essential for patient safety initiatives and clinical applications such as electronic prescribing, electronic dispensing, linking of actual products available for sale with medicines terminologies, and product bar code scanning at the patient bedside or in the operating theatre.



### Use of the NPC to ensure accurate product data will also enable:

1. A reduction in the misidentification of medications and medical products
2. Reduced catalogue and data management costs across the sector
3. Efficient identification and replacement of flawed, out-of-date or missing stock
4. A foundation for swift product recalls and precise product tracking
5. Improved product visibility, reporting and reach across Australia's healthcare organisations
6. Increased speed to market for new products
7. A foundation for eMessaging initiatives such as NEHTA's eProcurement strategy
8. Better inventory management, decreasing 'out-of-stocks' with less capital tied up in safety stocks
9. A reduction in order and invoice error rates, invoice claims, and out-of-stocks
10. The ability for staff to be deployed for work on higher-value tasks than basic data maintenance

### Why the NPC makes a difference

Sharing of healthcare product information in the past has been largely manual through emails, faxes and telephone calls. The information provided has also been inconsistent in content, format and detail, requiring significant additional work by data recipients to ensure standardisation of their data in their own systems. This has proved costly, error prone and inefficient.

By using the NPC, suppliers and buyers can share information with their trading partners both in Australia and around the world, via a single common mechanism. To make sure everyone is speaking the same "language", information in the NPC is based on consistent global standards.

The NPC is expected to save the sector up to \$200 million per annum by ensuring accurate, valid and up-to-date product data, and improved communications and supply chain operations.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Product Numbering Standards for Electronic Health Supply Chains, KPMG, October 2002.

### NPC Participants

The following organisations are some of the existing NPC data recipients, using the data loaded by healthcare suppliers to feed their internal systems:

#### Public Sector

Population of the NPC is a requirement for all health jurisdictions.

For more information about the Public sector NPC initiative, please contact the NEHTA Supply Chain Team via email to [supplychain@nehta.gov.au](mailto:supplychain@nehta.gov.au)

#### Private Sector

While the NPC was initially developed for the benefit of the public healthcare sector, a growing number of private sector organisations are now participating to take advantage of its benefits. Some of the organisations involved are:

- Clifford Hallam Healthcare (CH2)
- Healthscope Ltd
- Ramsay Health Care
- Sigma Wholesale
- St Vincent's Health
- Symbion Pharmacy Services

### Participating with the NPC initiative

#### There are three steps for suppliers to provide data to their trading partners via the NPC:

1. Register with GS1 Australia. Information about membership and the benefits is available at [www.gs1au.org](http://www.gs1au.org)
2. Register for the NPC (GS1net). GS1 Australia membership is a prerequisite for registration with GS1net. For more information refer to [www.gs1au.org/services/gs1net](http://www.gs1au.org/services/gs1net)
3. Become NPC Ready. This involves understanding the NPC data requirements, gathering and validating your product data, loading this to the NPC and publishing it to your trading partners. Information about the NPC Ready process is available in the NPC User Guide located at: [www.gs1au.org/services/gs1net/industry/npc/user\\_guides.asp](http://www.gs1au.org/services/gs1net/industry/npc/user_guides.asp)

*Achieving NPC Ready status is important, however once the appropriate information is loaded, keeping it up to date is critical.*

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For further information regarding the National Product Catalogue or for assistance in loading your product information please contact:

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