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NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

Media Release

PROJECT STOP WINS NATIONAL AWARD

An innovative tool developed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia to combat the manufacture of illegal drugs has been honoured at the National Drug & Alcohol Awards in Sydney last night. Project STOP won the 'Excellence in Law Enforcement' award, which recognises a program, policy or resource that makes a significant contribution to reducing harmful alcohol or drug use.

The Attorney General's Department nominated Project STOP – an online recording system that makes it extremely difficult for "pseudo runners" to travel from pharmacy to pharmacy accumulating enough pseudoephedrine-based products to manufacture a significant quantity of methamphetamines, such as 'speed' and 'ice'.

The award marks an important step in the introduction of Project STOP to pharmacies across Australia, after enjoying considerable success in Queensland pharmacies since October 2005. Since its inception in Queensland, Project STOP has contributed to a 23 per cent decrease in the number of clandestine drug laboratories and has assisted in more than 30 arrests.

"The diversion of pseudoephedrine for illegal manufacture into methamphetamines is a global problem," Kos Sclavos, National President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia said.

"The national roll-out of Project STOP will help community pharmacy and law enforcement fight the misuse of cold and flu medications across Australia and maintain access to these effective medicines for legitimate consumers."

Project STOP is the only system of its kind in the world and is based on an online database, which allows pharmacists to record sales of pseudoephedrine-based medications and request the identification of purchasers. Law enforcement agencies are then able to access the information to identify and track suspicious sales.

"The willingness of community pharmacists to utilise innovative technologies reflects their commitment to the principles of quality use of medicines, and their dedication to achieving the best health outcomes for the Australian community," Mr Sclavos said.

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For further enquiries please contact Shaun Singleton on 0437 677 611.

LEVEL 2, 15 NATIONAL CIRCUIT BARTON ACT 2600
PO BOX 7036, CANBERRA BUSINESS CENTRE ACT 2610 AUSTRALIA
TELEPHONE +61 2 6270 1888 • FACSIMILE +61 2 6270 1800
E-MAIL: guild.nat@guild.org.au
INTERNET: www.guild.org.au

