

# EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

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AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND



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### YOU ARE COUNTRY PRESIDENT, ASTRAZENECA (AZ) AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND. HOW DID YOUR CAREER PATH LEAD YOU TO THIS?

I studied medicine for five years in New Zealand and completed a business degree at UTS. I started my career in pharma as a sales representative calling on anaesthetists. I worked for nine years at Novartis in various roles, mostly in oncology in Australia and across Asia Pacific. I've been at AZ for 12 years, nine of which I spent overseas. I was responsible for global pricing and market access based in London, was oncology business unit director in China and also country president for AZ in South Korea. I was very excited to return home last October (2017) to lead the business in Australia and New Zealand.

### YOU HAVE BEEN COUNTRY PRESIDENT FOR A RELATIVELY SHORT TIME. WHAT RELATIONSHIP DO YOU SEE WITH THE BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY PHARMACY?

In my previous role in South Korea, my team grew very close to retail pharmacy as we offered support to conduct spirometry with asthma patients and provided education support for inhaler-device management.

On returning home, I can see that our current Australian environment is very disruptive, with major challenges and many opportunities on offer. New technologies are emerging, such as wearables and other techniques to digitally track a person's health, big data and access to real-time data and My Health Record, new relationships between doctors and patients, such as telehealth and e-prescribing, and other examples of digitisation of parts of the health sector.

Against this backdrop, the world for community pharmacy is changing rapidly. While AZ hasn't done as much as it could to engage and collaborate with pharmacy and pharmacists in the past, I can see the real potential and opportunity to partner with pharmacy as greater corporatisation takes place across the health sector and more recognition is given to the key interactive role pharmacy and pharmacists have with the community every day.

As a company, we're uniquely positioned to work with pharmacy, as we're committed to supporting patients in Australia with chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, asthma and COPD.

### PRIOR TO YOU TAKING THE TOP JOB, THE BUSINESS DECIDED TO TAKE SOME PRODUCTS EXCLUSIVELY DIRECT. HOW HAS THAT GONE FOR YOU?

The decision was made earlier last year and implemented from November, shortly after I returned to Australia. Exclusive direct distribution wasn't well received by all wholesalers and pharmacy.

Frankly, it's been a learning experience for AZ, which has prompted me to consult widely with stakeholders, including community pharmacy and the Pharmacy Guild, and to review AZ's distribution model in response to those learnings and messages.

### DOES AZ HAVE A HEALTHY PRODUCT PIPELINE?

After a period of decline following several patent expiries, AZ has built a really exciting pipeline which is contributing to AZ's 'return to growth' strategy. The vision of our global CEO and the commitment to expanded investments in research and development, including in Australia, have paid off. As a company, the balance of our portfolio is shifting from a predominantly primary-care company to more medicines coming through focused on specialty care. Our key focus areas for growth are cancer, asthma and COPD, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and renal disease.

### WHAT ARE YOUR PRIORITIES FOR THE BUSINESS?

As a company, we're committed to science and patient benefit. While we've been declining for several years in Australia, my first priority is to return our business to growth with successful launches of our new medicines for patients in Australia and New Zealand. We're also focused on delivering benefit for patients by engaging in strong and enduring win-win partnerships with stakeholders within the health sector, in particular community pharmacy. This will mean all AZ employees will need to develop entrepreneurial skills, engage externally, move faster and develop new capabilities to capture opportunities that digital health offers. I'm also committed to supporting our Australian manufacturing site, which continues to expand and export respiratory medicines that are making a real difference for patients in China. I'm proud to showcase AZ's facility, which is a great example of smart manufacturing, Australian engineering, exports growth, new jobs and positive impact on the Australian economy.



APP is the largest pharmacy conference and trade exhibition in Australia. This premier industry event offers attendees a four-day educational program, an exciting networking and social agenda and a trade show, and will be held March 7-10, 2019.