

Auror Subject Recognition (ASR) Trial

A summary of our privacy assessment

The safety of our customers, patients and team members is our highest priority. Chemist Warehouse New Zealand is running a limited trial of facial recognition technology, called Auror Subject Recognition (ASR), in five Auckland stores to help reduce serious harmful behaviour and repeat offending. Before starting the trial we completed a full Privacy Impact Assessment. This page summarises what we found and the protections we have put in place.

Why we are trialing this technology

Between 2023 and 2025, more than 14,000 incidents of harmful behaviour were recorded across our New Zealand stores. The number of incidents more than tripled over that period, and around 22% involved repeat offenders. These incidents include violence, threats, weapon-related offending and significant theft. We are trialing ASR to test whether it can help address these risks in a way that is safe, lawful, necessary and proportionate.

Participating stores

- Chemist Warehouse Lower Queen Street, Auckland Central
- Chemist Warehouse Victoria Street, Auckland CBD
- Chemist Warehouse Glen Innes
- Chemist Warehouse St Lukes
- Chemist Warehouse Broadway, Newmarket

How we protect your privacy

The trial has been designed so that the use of facial recognition is lawful, necessary and proportionate. The technology is provided by Auror, a New Zealand company, which processes information on our behalf under strict contractual controls. Our key safeguards include:

- If you are not on the watchlist, your facial data is not kept. It is deleted within seconds.
- A person is only added to the watchlist if they meet strict, documented criteria for serious harmful behaviour or significant unlawful activity, and only after manual review and approval. No one under 18 is added.
- Watchlist records are held for up to 24 months, depending on the incident, and are then removed automatically.
- Every possible match is reviewed by at least two trained staff before any action is taken. No decisions are made by the system alone.
- A watchlist match only creates an alert for staff to review. It never automatically refuses service or prevents you from getting the medicines or health care you need.
- The watchlist is shared across the participating trial stores so we can identify people who move between them. It is not shared with other retailers. Information is shared with Police only where legally permitted, such as under a warrant or court order.
- We use ASR only for safety and crime prevention, never for marketing, analytics, profiling, emotion detection, demographic categorisation, general customer tracking, staff monitoring or automated decision-making.

- The technology is independently tested for accuracy and bias (including by the US National Institute of Standards and Technology) and is operated above the accuracy level the Privacy Commissioner expects.
- Information is hosted on Microsoft Azure in Australia, encrypted in transit and at rest, and protected by internationally recognised security certifications (ISO 27001 and SOC 2).
- We have specific protections for children and vulnerable people, and we monitor the trial for fairness, bias and any disproportionate impact on Maori.

Oversight

We completed a full Privacy Impact Assessment for the trial and proactively engaged with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner before it began. The trial runs for a limited period and is subject to ongoing review. At the end of the trial we will assess the results against pre-set criteria and share what we found.

Your choices and your rights

Participating stores display clear signage at their entrances so you can make an informed decision before entering. If you would prefer not to enter a store using this technology, you can shop online at chemistwarehouse.co.nz or visit a non-participating store. You have the right to ask for access to your personal information, to ask us to correct it, to ask to be removed from the watchlist, and to raise a concern or make a complaint. To make any of these requests, see our [Privacy Policy](#).