

PBS under control

GUILD president Kos Sclavos last night revealed that growth in Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme expenditure has been much slower than earlier forecasts.

In fact by the end of the current Guild-Govt agreement there will have been 100 million less prescriptions dispensed than predicted, saving taxpayers \$3.5b.

And the PBS as a percentage of national GDP is now less than in 2001, with these figures taken before any further savings from the implementation in Aug of the wide ranging PBS reforms, he said.

Project STOP on US shortlist

THE Pharmacy Guild's Project STOP anti-pseudoephedrine abuse software system has been shortlisted for a possible national rollout across the USA.

It's already in use in a number of US states according to Guild president Kos Sclavos, who revealed the potential blanket implementation at the Guild's annual Parliamentary Dinner in Canberra last night.

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Roxon backs pharmacy

HEALTH minister Nicola Roxon last night strongly endorsed the current direction of pharmacy's professional programs, saying they're an example of how the govt wants to change the health system to improve prevention and primary care.

Speaking at the Guild's annual

Pharmacy crunch

MORE than fifty Australian pharmacies are under pressure from banks to refinance facilities as a result of the global economic crisis.

Guild President Kos Sclavos said last night that it's an example of how these global financial events can significantly affect a seemingly unrelated sector.

New name for S100

THE new Pharmacy Guild national committee is hoping that the current Section 100 scheme can be renamed to better communicate its purpose.

The government's S100 program provides allowances to help pharmacies provide support services to remote area Aboriginal Health Services, with a suggested name being RAMS for Remote Area Medicines Scheme.

Tony Riley to head negotiations

VICTORIAN national Guild councillor Toni Riley has been chosen as the head of the Guild's negotiating committee during the new National Council's inaugural meeting this week.

The move will see Riley dealing extensively with the health dept the lead-up to the proposed Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

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Parliamentary dinner (see pics p2) Roxon said she was watching the effectiveness of the various programs incl diabetes, MMR and the soon-to-roll out asthma scheme and "if they're successful we'll look at expanding them."

Roxon said she was looking forward to partnering with the Guild in developing the 5th agreement "to improve health outcomes for all Australians."

Mirixa launch in 09

THE Pharmacy Guild's new Mirixa system (PD 15 Oct) will be officially launched to the industry at next year's National Conference.

Guild president Kos Sclavos described it as an IT solution which will provide systems to Australian pharmacies to enable them to record activity and boost patient compliance and adherence.

Sclavos confirmed that five major pharmaceutical companies have already signed agreements with the Guild for Mirixa's rollout.

Guild honours

LAST night's Pharmacy Guild dinner in Canberra saw a number of pharmacists honoured for their contribution to the profession.

Andrew Gullotta, community pharmacist and long time NSW branch member, received the National Presidents Award.

Honorary Life Membership of the Guild was awarded to Ian Marshall, inaugural Northern Territory branch president; Harvey Cuthill, long-time Tasmanian Guild committee member; John Dornan, NSW councillor and Guild negotiator; and Harry Zafer, former WA branch president.



DISPENSARY CORNER

GUILD President Kos Sclavos warmly welcomed politicians of all persuasions to the Guild's annual Parliamentary Dinner in Canberra last night (see p2).

He particularly remarked on the change in the Labor Party members who had been relaxed opposition members at last year's dinner, which took place in the lead-up to the federal election in which Kevin Rudd's ALP took power.

"A year on, you're all on blood pressure and anti-stress medication and I'm sure you'll spend the whole evening asking the pharmacists on your table about health issues," Sclavos quipped.

THE jocularity about the change in government continued when health minister Nicola Roxon made her speech at the event.

She generously welcomed shadow health minister Peter Dutton, but added: "I'm sorry to report to you Peter that it's definitely more fun to come to this even as the minister rather than the shadow minister."

At last year's dinner the guest speakers were Roxon as well as former health minister Tony Abbott.

AND Roxon also confided that one of the advantages of her position related to her family background, as the daughter of two pharmacists.

"I grew up being told what to do by my parents, and it's nice to think that as Health Minister I can turn the tables," she joked.

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LAST night the Pharmacy Guild hosted its annual dinner at Parliament House in Canberra, with photos on this page taken during the event.

RIGHT: The National Council of the Guild is pictured with keynote speaker, minister Nicola Roxon.

Back row from left: Scott McGregor (SA), Ian Todd (SA), Tim Logan (Qld), Rob Foster (Vic), Si Banks (NSW). Second back row: Harry Zafer (WA), Paul Sinclair (NSW), Amanda Galbraith (ACT), Mike Farrell (Qld). Third row: Lenette Mullins (WA), Dipak Sanghvi (Vic), Julianne Drewitt (Tas). Front row: Toni Riley (Vic), Nunzio Meta (NT), Guild executive director Wendy Phillips, Health Minister Nicola Roxon, Guild national president Kos Sclavos, and Judy Liauw (Tas).



Yes Minister!



LEFT: National Prescribing Service ceo Lynn Weekes with Iqbal Ramzan, Sydney University.

RIGHT: Kim Bessell of the Dept of Health with the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's Joseph Demarte, John Daffey and Warwick Plunkett.



RIGHT: Alphapharm's Robert Richardson catching up on the latest with Patrick Davies from Symbion Health.



LEFT: Julia Evans and Jenny Greenhalgh, both of Medicare Australia.

BELOW: Bill Kelly, ceo of AACP with the Pharmacy Guild's Magda Markezic.



LEFT: A bevy of Guild beauties: Kate Bronger, Anna Silkeci, Lesley Gray, Michelle Morrison, Frances Stanton and Varinia Sowden.



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