



The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia

This week's Guild update

Victorian bushfires

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia extends its sympathies to those affected by the horrific bushfires in Victoria over the past few days.

The Guild is aware of members who have not only lost private and commercial property, but have more devastatingly been touched by the bushfire death and injury tolls.

Similarly, the Guild declares its overwhelming respect and admiration for community pharmacists and staff who are working very near the bushfire-affected areas.

They are doing everything in their power to assist patients in this very stressful and tragic time, even as their own properties - and sometimes loved ones - are at risk.

In times of tragedy, such as this, community pharmacy's role as frontline health service providers and the advice they give are invaluable to those in need.

Providing emergency supplies to those who have lost much-needed medicines in the fires, as well as providing products and services to help treat fire and smoke related injuries, are just two ways in which community pharmacy staff members are assisting victims of the bushfires.

Reports of staff who weren't rostered on to work attending pharmacies to lend assistance reflect the commitment these people have to providing pharmacy services to their communities.

The Guild is also encouraging pharmacy staff not based in bushfire affected areas to consider making financial or blood donations to aid in the disaster response.

Pharmacy advice for govt

PROFESSOR Andrew McLachlan, Professor of Pharmacy (Aged Care) at Sydney University, will chair a key committee announced last Friday by the government to advise it on the National Medicines Policy.

It's part of a new advisory structure to support the Policy, which provides a framework for medication access, safety and quality in Australia.

The new three-tiered structure comprises a Policy Executive, a Policy Committee and an annual National Medicines Policy Partnerships Forum.

The Policy Committee, which will "provide advice on emerging medicines policy issues", will be chaired by McLachlan, with other members and their fields of expertise including Professor Alan Bensoussan (complementary

medicines) and Professor Paul Rolan (pharmacology).

The Policy Executive will advise on implementation of the policy within the health portfolio, and includes McLachlan as well as NPS chair Dr Janette Randall, PBAC chair Professor Lloyd Sansom, and TGA chief Dr Rohan Hammett.

Medicines Australia said the new structure "fills a vacuum which has existed since the Australian Pharmaceutical Advisory Council and the Pharmaceutical Health and Rational Use of Medicines expert advisory committee were disbanded two years ago."

MA ceo Ian Chalmers urged that the first Partnerships Forum be convened as early as possible.

Help for victims

FINANCIAL assistance has been made available for pharmacists affected by the weekend's bushfires through the PSA Victorian Branch Benevolent Fund, while the Pharmacist Support Service is providing free 24-hour counselling for colleagues affected by the fires.

Medicines Australia has also donated \$100,000 to the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund.

The Pharmacist Support Service can be contacted on 0419 222 656, while for assistance from the PSA Benevolent Fund call Judy Sinclair on 03 9389 4002.

Stress broadcast

PHARMACISTS can learn how to improve management of mental illness following trauma through the Rural Health Education Foundation Broadcast on Feb 24.

For further information see www.rhef.com.au.

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SUNBURN in places which usually don't see the sunshine is probably the major danger being faced by a spate of naked hikers in Switzerland.

Swiss officials have warned that it's illegal to bushwalk in the nude, and people caught rambling without their clothes on will face on-the-spot fines.

Apparently it's a popular pastime with German tourists.

Reports don't say where the naked hikers are expected to carry the cash to pay the fines - although some are understood to still carry rucksacks.

"OH CRAP, there goes my work."

That was the headline on a report of the tragic loss of 35kg of rare lizard poo, which had been collected over seven years by a British researcher.

David Bennett had amassed the faeces of the rare butaan lizard during field trips to the Philippines, as part of his PhD studies at Leeds University in northern England.

Unfortunately while he was away recently a clear-out of his laboratory saw the excrement accidentally thrown away.

"To some people it might have been just a bag of lizard shit," he told *Times Higher Education*.

"But its loss left me reeling and altered the course of my life forever," he added.

The university has offered £500 in compensation and an official apology, saying the samples were "thrown away in error because they were in an unmarked bag."



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