

Pharmacy DAILY

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Guild Update

Pharmacy Workforce

How many pharmacists does Australia have? How many are we training? And how many do we need in the coming decade and beyond?

These will be among the questions considered in Canberra today at a major meeting of pharmacy education and industry stakeholders convened by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

The Pharmacy Workforce Symposium will take as its starting point the recent findings of the Pharmacy Workforce Planning Research Project funded under the Fourth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

There has been much industry discussion about the intake of pharmacy student numbers at universities and the ability of those students to find jobs when they complete their studies. It is extremely important to the Guild and all in the industry that policy makers have the best information available to make the right decisions about the pharmacy workforce into the future.

The symposium has brought together around 50 representatives from government, university pharmacy schools, pharmacy students, and peak industry bodies. Among today's speakers are Guild National President Kos Sclavos; the principal pharmacy adviser to the Department of Health and Ageing, Kim Bessell; the head of the school of pharmacy from the University of Queensland, Professor Nick Shaw; the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Pharmacy Council, Lyn LeBlanc; and Guild National Councillor Toni Riley.

The leader of the Pharmacy Workforce Planning Research Project, Lee Ridoutt of Human Capital Alliance, is also making a presentation, which includes an update on the findings of the model developed by the project.

All attendees at the symposium have an opportunity to take part in an open forum discussion about these issues.



The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia

Workforce forecast revised

RECENT changes to Australia's skilled migration program are likely to significantly reduce the supply of pharmacists for the country's health system in the future.

Effective 01 July overseas pharmacists are no longer able to apply for independent immigration status under the program, with the move a hot topic at today's Pharmacy Workforce Symposium convened by the Guild in Canberra.

The Symposium aimed to examine the findings of a Pharmacy Workforce Planning Research Project which was funded under the Fourth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

Attendees from across the industry including the Guild, PSA, universities, the Pharmacy Board of Australia, pharmacy students and the health department took part in robust discussions on the future of the pharmacy workforce.

The project outcomes were presented by consultant Lee Ridoutt of Human Capital Alliance, who

New PSA chief

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia yesterday announced the appointment of Liesel Welt as its new Chief Executive Officer.

Welt is currently deputy ceo and Chief Operating Officer of the Australian General Practice Network, and is expected to take up her new position on 01 October.

PSA National President, Warwick Plunkett, said she would bring to the role "a wealth of experience in the health field" as well as strong and ongoing relationships with Government and private sector stakeholders to help take PSA forward during "very challenging times for the health sector".

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'Program ready' pharmacists wanted

UNIVERSITIES across Australia are being urged to produce so-called "Program Ready" graduate pharmacists, who are trained as part of their degree courses in various professional programs under the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

Guild President Kos Sclavos said that in negotiations with the govt under the Agreement it was clear that key requirements for program funding included whether there was sufficient capacity and current competencies in the pharmacy workforce, as well as the ability for national roll-out of programs.

Speaking at today's Pharmacy Workforce Symposium in Canberra Sclavos said that if universities provided details of which Agreement programs their graduates are trained in, as well as the numbers of students enrolled in each year, this would help in this area.

demonstrated a workforce planning tool which allows modelling of future pharmacist supply and demand in Australia.

A large number of variables can be 'tweaked' in the model to provide best guess predictions, and earlier in the year the program caused some consternation because it predicted (PD 04 Mar) that there would be an oversupply of about 3000 pharmacists in Australia by 2025.

Ridoutt emphasised that these figures were based on a number of assumptions, but said that they could also be interpreted in two ways: either as a concerning worry about an oversupply, or alternatively as providing significant additional capacity for pharmacists to take on new professional services roles.

Notwithstanding this, adjusting the model to take into account the changes to the skilled migration program significantly lessened the gap to about 500 extra pharmacists across Australia in 2025.

The changes highlighted the need for accurate data on registration information and tracking of pharmacist career paths to help better predict movements in the national health workforce.

Guild calls for more Board information

THE Pharmacy Guild today urged the national Pharmacy Board of Australia to obtain additional information from registrants in order to give a better picture of the national pharmacy workforce.

Speaking at the Pharmacy Workforce Symposium in Canberra (see main story), Guild President Kos Sclavos called on the Board to also request details of average weekly hours worked by registrants, where pharmacists work (community, hospital, industry etc) and the university where they completed their pharmacy degree.

Demographic data collected by the Board as part of registration renewals would also allow reporting of pharmacist density across the country, and allow tracking of shortfalls and oversupplies of pharmacists in city and rural areas.

The Guild is also suggesting that the Board report on drop-off rates from registration after two, five and ten years post graduation.

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New blood glucose monitor from J&J

JOHNSON & Johnson Medical today launched a new personal blood glucose monitoring system in Australia.

Onetouch Verio is claimed to "offer pharmacy customers with diabetes a new way to measure their blood glucose more accurately," with the product being the only self-monitoring blood glucose system labelled to meet specifications higher than the current ISO specification.

Using so-called 'Tri-Sure Strip Technology' which was discovered, developed and manufactured in Melbourne, the Onetouch Verio also utilises the FAD-GDH enzyme which is very specific to glucose, and has no reaction to maltose and galactose.

The meter is also easy to use because it never needs to be manually calibrated, providing greater convenience and less chance for user error, while there's also a downloadable 500-test memory - info 1800 543 372.

Medicines Aust priorities

PEAK pharmaceutical body Medicines Australia today urged Labor and the Coalition to implement the Memorandum of Understanding it signed with the govt in the lead-up to the budget earlier this year, no matter what the outcome of the election.

The call was part of a paper outlining MA's election priorities, which also include ensuring that innovation is supported.

"The Australian medicines industry's contribution to the national economy is more than \$4 billion in exports, 14,000 employed in skilled jobs, and \$1 billion in R&D investment," said Medicines Australia ceo Brendan Shaw.

"But Australia is facing strong competition from other countries.

"Protecting intellectual property, passing the R&D tax Bill and making Australia a more attractive destination for clinical trials will make this country more competitive," he added.

The third key focus area for the government is the delivery of better

access, information and opportunities associated with the PBS listing of medicines.

"Australians should not have to wait three years for a new medicine to be listed on the PBS," Shaw said.

He said increasing the threshold for cabinet approval of PBS drugs to \$20m would halve the number of medicines delayed by red tape.

APC cost recovery

THE major shift in arrangements under the national health practitioner registration scheme has left the Australian Pharmacy Council without some of its previous sources of funding.

Speaking at today's Pharmacy Workforce Symposium in Canberra, Lyn LeBlanc from the Australian Pharmacy Council confirmed that the Pharmacy Board of Australia had declined to subsidise the pharmacy course accreditation function undertaken by the APC, meaning that universities will be levied full cost recovery.

LeBlanc said the removal of pharmacists from the skilled migration category would also see a reduction in numbers of foreign pharmacists wanting to have their qualifications assessed, with this also impacting APC revenue.

South Aust PSA POTY

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has named the three pharmacists in line to take home the title of South Australian Pharmacist of the Year 2010.

The finalists are: Kिरrily Chambers, accredited pharmacist and diabetes educator; Lewis Pountis, accredited pharmacist, proprietor and diabetes educator; and Julie Bedford, accredited pharmacist and proprietor.

"The strength of the field of nominations was exceptionally high and I congratulate everyone who was nominated," said South Australian President of the PSA, Grant Kardachi.

"This is the State's most prestigious pharmacy award and one which recognises the very best in our profession," he added.

The winner of the award is set to be announced later this month at the SA Pharmacy Profession Dinner.



DISPENSARY CORNER

NO Aerogard needed here!

A British sculptor has angered animal rights groups with her new 'flylashes' film, which sees her use real fly's legs as lash extensions.

The online "art-video" depicts the artists eye as it blinks and looks around, framed by the deceased insects legs.

"I'll give her this: I can see how she might find tiny flies' legs to be reminiscent of human eyelashes, but couldn't she just leave it at that?" said a member of PETA Karin Bennett.

"I mean, my rescued beagle Lulu, R.I.P., had ears that felt just like velvet, but that didn't inspire me to go around hacking off hounds' ears to make a beagle blazer," Bennett added.

To see the film for yourself go to www.jessicaharrison.co.uk.

A LAMB born in China's Shandong province is beating the odds, having reached its two month birthday despite being born with only two legs.

Fed via baby bottles after birth, the lamb initially struggled with its condition but now manages itself quite well by balancing its weight on its two front legs.

"It is very strong willed and brave. Despite only having two legs, it is living normally just like other lambs," said the lamb's owner Cui Jinxiu

"Once it sees me or hears my voice, it runs to me with excitement, and rub my pants with its head," Jinxiu added



Heading for a circus - or the butcher?

WIN A REFRESHING BODY MIST



Congratulations to Anna Michael from APHS who was yesterday's lucky winner of the Body America's Body Mist.

Every day this week, **Pharmacy Daily** is giving readers the chance to win a Refreshing Body Mist from the Body America. Organics with Attitude range, courtesy of **Total Beauty Network**.

Body America redefines organics with its retro chic look and commitment to protecting the body and the environment with its certified organic body pampering treats.

The 1950s inspired retro packaging pays homage to Americas past, present and future, with each flavour honouring a much loved region of the United States. Body America's pin up girls are playful and innocent...an endearing attribute to be celebrated! The range has been

designed for all skin types and is enriched with certified organic Aloe Vera Leaf juice to help naturally soothe and protect skin.

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