

Guild referendum OK

PHARMACY Guild members have overwhelmingly voted in favour of a new membership model, which will take effect from 01 Jul 2017.

More than 93% of votes cast in a national referendum (**PD** 03 Nov) were in favour of the move, which sees payments based on premises rather than proprietors, recognising with the fact that these days pharmacies are increasingly owned by multiple proprietors.

About 78% of members will pay lower membership fees under the new model, which provides representation for members based on the number of premises owned and makes it easier and more affordable for new members to join.

Guild alleges Review conflict

THE Pharmacy Guild has identified what it describes as a serious conflict of interest for the Review of Pharmacy Remuneration and Regulation, in relation to consultancy firm Deloitte which has been contracted to advise the Review while also having consulted to Chemist Warehouse for its submission on reforming pharmacy ownership and location rules.

Guild president George Tambassis wrote to members on Sat following the release of the Panel's final 2016 communiqué late last week (**PD** yesterday), saying it was of "great concern" that the Panel had not addressed the matter.

"In the interests of transparency, it is imperative that all documentation relating to the Review's interactions with Deloitte is made public as soon as possible," Tambassis fumed, pledging that the Guild would pursue a Freedom of Information request on the matter.

Tambassis said this conflict "seriously undermines the independence of the Review and makes it virtually impossible for it to make untainted recommendations, particularly in regard to location rules".

The Guild has also highlighted further concerns about the current Pharmacy Financial Survey being conducted by the Panel, saying it contained "significant defects" rendering it incapable of providing an accurate picture of the sector.

"Given these inherent flaws, we cannot endorse the survey or recommend that you answer it".

Tambassis assured members the Guild was committing all resources into ensuring that community pharmacies got a fair, evidence based outcome from the Review.

"However we cannot stand by and allow the Review to get away with fundamental conflicts of interest and flawed and unaccountable approaches to pharmacy financial data collection," he said, pledging that the Guild would "not rest until these issues are addressed".

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has two pages of news plus a full page from **Pharmacy 4 Less**, offering location opportunities for pharmacists planning to become a pharmacy owner, and wishing to join Australia's fastest growing pharmacy franchise.

Two new MA directors

CHAIRMAN of Medicines Australia (MA), Wes Cook, has announced the appointment of Melissa McGregor and Bruce Goodwin to the Board of Directors.

Melissa McGregor is the managing director of Pfizer in Australia and New Zealand, while Bruce Goodwin is the managing director of Janssen Pharmaceuticals in Australia and New Zealand (a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson).

Their appointments follow the recent departures of Geoff McDonald (GSK) and James Priour (Amgen) from the Board.

Both appointees will hold their positions until the next Annual General Meeting, to be held in Oct 2017, when all Board positions will be up for nomination.

Goodwin previously served on the MA Board between 2009 and 2012 and McGregor was a Board member in NZ when she was running Pfizer's operations there.

Rhonda & Terry doctorates

QUEENSLAND

University of Technology has awarded honorary doctorate degrees to Rhonda and Terry White (pictured), the pioneering



Queensland pharmacy couple who co-founded the Terry White Group.

Both are alumni of QUT, and in bestowing the awards, the University recognised Rhonda's distinguished service to the community and the significant contributions she had made to the pharmacy profession, including the education of pharmacists.

Terry was acknowledged for distinguished service to the

community, in particular through public office, and the leadership roles he has played within the pharmacy profession.

Terry White opened his first pharmacy in 1958 at Woody Point, while Rhonda White opened her own pharmacy at Clontarf in 1964.

In 1994, they went on to establish the country's first national pharmacy franchise, Terry White Chemists, together with their son, Anthony.

The group has since grown to become the largest pharmacy network in Australia with about 500 pharmacies, now incorporating the Chemmart brand as well.



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Name all of DU'IT Baby products in the range.

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Zoe Blandfort from the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.



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Dispensary Corner

HOW does Santa deliver presents worldwide, slithering his bulging bulk down narrow chimneys? Einstein had the answer.

Dr Katy Sheen from Exeter University in the UK calculated that Santa & his reindeer need to travel at about 10 million km/hour to deliver presents to every child celebrating the occasion in a 31 hour period, taking into account different time zones.

Using Einstein's theory of special relativity, objects travelling at high speed become compressed in size - meaning the jolly man would shrink, allowing him to slip down all those chimneys.

He is also able to move around without being spotted because light waves get squashed at high speeds. And we're talking really high speeds - Father Christmas would need to be moving 200 000 times faster than Usain Bolt!



NEW YORK police officers smashed a car window to assist an elderly lady they suspected may have frozen to death in her car, only to learn she was simply a lifelike CPR mannequin.

"Just to clear the record, all citizens of Hudson should be put on notice that if you park your locked vehicle on the street on a sub-zero night with a life-size realistic mannequin seated in it...we will break your window," police said after the incident.

TGA confirms codeine ruling

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has confirmed its decision to upschedule products containing codeine to a prescription only status from over-the-counter (S2/3 to S4) (**PD** breaking news).

The changes will be effective from 01 Feb 2018, until which time there will be no adjustments to the availability of these products, allowing suppliers and retailers to adjust their stock positions, and set up new approved labelling.

Patients requiring painkilling medicines containing codeine will need to secure a prescription from their prescribing healthcare professional to access these meds.

The TGA said extensive consultation with all stakeholders revealed that although the current codeine containing products were never intended for long term use, many patients had been using them to self-medicate for chronic pain exposing themselves to the risk of addiction.

In addition, the TGA said it took into consideration that there

was little evidence that low-dose codeine medicines were any more effective for pain relief or cough than similar medicines without codeine.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia has responded to the decision with a "fails consumers" statement claiming that the necessity of a prescription "will simply add to overall healthcare costs and do little to address the misuse of these products by some patients".

Guild national president George Tambassis argued that community pharmacists could manage the addiction/misuse issue.

Using the MedsASSIST real-time recording system developed by the Guild and in use since Mar this year, Australian pharmacists have denied codeine containing products to some 70,000 patients suspected of misuse, with almost 50% of these being referred on to their GP.

The upscheduling would "create a barrier to the majority of consumers who use these products safely," he added.

Victorian top intern award

ROBERT Scarso of Chemist Warehouse Fairfield has been announced as the Victorian winner of the 2016 PSA-MIMS Victorian Intern of the Year award.

It's the second year running the discount pharmacy group has taken out the top honour for Victoria, with Xavier Agostino receiving the award in 2015.

The Intern Training Program conducted by Chemist Warehouse Group was established in 1987 and has grown rapidly.

What started as a small program with just a few intern pharmacists has evolved into a large-scale training curriculum with several coordinators in each state and

territory to accommodate more than 300 intern pharmacists participating this year alone.

Chemist Warehouse Group chief operating officer Mario Tascone, himself a product of the 1990 Intern program, believes the internship is the first stepping-stone for most pharmacists working within the group today.

"The Chemist Warehouse Group is proud to conduct an internship program of such a high calibre, supporting the development of skills and expert teaching for our staff," Tascone said.

"We are delighted that another one of our own talented pharmacy interns has received the award."

Guild Update

PBS co-payment, Pensioner Concession Card changes

FROM 1 January 2017, the PBS co-payment charge will rise in line with rises in the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The new co-payments are \$38.80 (was \$38.30) for general patients and \$6.30 (was \$6.20) for concessional patients.

Rises reflect a 1.3% CPI indexation (rounded up to the nearest 10 cents) which is lower than has been seen in recent years.

Also on 1 January 2017, as a result of changes to the asset test for pensioners, some pensioners will lose entitlement to their Pensioner Concession Card. Instead these pensioners will become eligible for a Low Income Health Care Card and, if they are pension age, will also receive a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

These new cards cannot physically be sent before 1 January 2017 so customers will not get their new cards until mid-January 2017.

Centrelink is seeking assistance to make sure customers are able to receive their concession entitlement on prescriptions they need to fill before their new cards arrive.

Until their cards arrive, these customers can provide their Centrelink Customer Reference Number which is on a letter from Centrelink or on their expired Pensioner Concession Card.

This unique reference number can be used to confirm that the customer's concessions entitlement still exists.

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