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## New NSW Guild Branch members

**THE** Pharmacy Guild has announced the appointment of Catherine Bronger, Caroline Diamantis and Adele Tahan to fill casual vacancies on the NSW Branch Committee.

The move follows consultation among the Branch Committee and the Guild's broader membership to fill the places created by the retirement of Paul Sinclair, Denis Leahy and Mark Douglass.

NSW branch president, Rick Samimi, said "the addition of three female pharmacists to the Branch Committee was particularly welcome, in the interests of diversity and gender balance".

## Bad debt hits result

**SIGMA'S** \$100.2 million "underlying profit" (see main story) was impacted by the previously announced one-off \$11.4 million insurance recovery and an \$8.3 million doubtful debt provision relating to a single pharmacy group.

CEO Mark Hooper stressed that "while disappointing, they are both one-off impacts reflecting historical issues and are not reflective of systemic operational or structural issues".

## Sigma confirms forecast

**SIGMA** Pharmaceuticals ceo Mark Hooper yesterday reaffirmed that the company was expecting earnings growth of at least 5% this year, with the company recording \$100.2m in underlying profit for the year to 31 Jan (**PD** breaking news).

Hooper said the result showed Sigma had "consistently delivered on its promises," with shareholders receiving a 3c per share dividend, while "for our pharmacy customers, it means Sigma's continued ability to invest in programs to support their success".

He said Sigma was continuing to diversify its earnings streams away from the PBS, with non-PBS medicines now accounting for 55% of items distributed by the firm.

Sigma is targeting a 50/50 revenue split between PBS and non-PBS items, but still has a way

## Vaccine innovation

**MÉDECINS** Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has successfully trialled an innovative heat-stable rotavirus infection vaccine which could prevent large numbers of children dying from diarrhoea in sub-Saharan Africa.

**CLICK HERE** for more information.

to go, with PBS items, excluding the expensive hepatitis C medicines, still accounting for 64% of revenue.

Hooper said the overall result reflected ongoing investment in the company's pharmacy operations.

"We have leveraged our scale to invest significantly in our national brands and patient focussed programs over the past few years, and we now have the most compelling offer in the market."

Other bright spots in the result were the strong performance of the China market, which has seen sales more than double the company's initial expectations.

Hooper confirmed the company was now looking to push into the Hong Kong market, to leverage off momentum already established in mainland China.

Sigma is also continuing to invest in its distribution network, with a new site at Berrinba in South East Queensland expected to be fully operational next year, while Hooper confirmed a new \$55 million investment in a new distribution centre in Canning Vale, WA.

Construction will commence shortly on the site which "will have capacity to meet the long term needs of our business," Hooper said.

## WIN WITH INNOXA

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## Dispensary Corner

IT'S a dog-eat-dog world out there - literally - for a pooch that's collected not \$200 but the Yorkie dog Scottie from Monopoly.

The X-ray image **below** was posted by Reddit user brainyblond showing the canine within the canine, with the animal's owner definitely hoping the token will "pass Go" if you catch our drift!



THERE'S an app for everything... even testing male fertility!

There can be an element of stress and embarrassment attending a clinic getting your sperm tested to see if it's rocking.

A new "sperm selfie" gadget which costs just US\$6 to make attaches to your smartphone and uses the in-built camera to video a sample in the privacy of your own home.

The device, developed by researchers at Harvard Medical School, records a one second video of the sample which shows the little swimmers in action and analyses their performance, reports *Scientific American*.

A study of the new test kit, published in the *Science Translational Medicine* journal, found untrained users were able to measure sperm count and concentration, detecting abnormalities with 97% accuracy.

## Pregabalin concern

**PREGABALIN**, a PBS-listed drug used for the treatment of sciatica, has been found to be no more effective than placebo, according to a study conducted by the George Institute for Global Health.

Even worse, the research found twice as many people from the group taking the active medicine reported side effects compared to those on the placebo.

The study was published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

## Co-Payment resource

THE Department of Human Services has released a revised education guide for the Closing the Gap - PBS Co-Payment Measure with the aim of providing more helpful information on the scheme.

The updated guide has extra details to help prescribers and pharmacists meet the requirements of the scheme, including dispensing requirements for CTG annotation code prescriptions, patient payments and PBS Safety Net recording, patient contributions, claiming and script serial numbers.

There's also a case study detailing the benefits of the scheme for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients with, or at risk of, a chronic disease - see [humanservices.gov.au](http://humanservices.gov.au).

## Sigma hospital strong

THE entrance of Sigma Pharmaceuticals into the hospital pharmacy market "continues to build," according to ceo Mark Hooper, with the business holding about 20% market share in Vic.

Details of the growth were revealed in Sigma's annual results announcement yesterday (see p1), with Hooper saying "our push into NSW has just begun, but signs are promising with over 30 hospital accounts trading with us consistently, providing a platform for continued growth" while growth is also planned in WA.

Sigma is also extending its wholesale business into "pre-wholesale opportunities," with the CHS Healthcare operation giving the company a national presence which has more than doubled the company's revenue in this area.

## DDS vaxes help India

**DISCOUNT** Drug Stores has announced that it will donate \$2 of every \$20 flu vaccination administered in its pharmacies to charity group Free2Be.

The 'Get a Shot, Give a Chance' campaign will help give impoverished Indian children access to improved healthcare and education.

## Events Calendar

**WELCOME** to *Pharmacy Daily's* events calendar, opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email [info@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:info@pharmacydaily.com.au).

**31 Mar-2 Apr:** Extension Seminar in Clinical Medication Management; Novotel Melbourne; register here: [www.shpa.org.au](http://www.shpa.org.au)

**29-30 Apr:** Victorian Pharmacy Conference 2017; Monash University, Parkville; register here: [www.psa.org.au](http://www.psa.org.au)

**21 May:** 2017 PSA WA Annual Seminar; Pan Pacific Perth; register here: [www.psa.org.au](http://www.psa.org.au)

**4-5 Jun:** Naturally Good Expo; ICC Sydney; pre-register for free or \$30 at the door - details here: [naturallygood.com.au](http://naturallygood.com.au)

**16-18 Jun:** ConPharm 2017; Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart; find out more: [www.aacp.com.au](http://www.aacp.com.au)

**28-30 Jul:** PSA17; Hyatt Regency, Darling Harbour, Sydney; for details see: [www.psa17.com](http://www.psa17.com)

**5-9 Aug:** Medici Capital Pharmacy Snow Business Conference 2017; Mt. Buller, Victoria; register your interest here: [www.medici.com.au](http://www.medici.com.au)

**1-3 Sep:** Pharmacy Connect; Hilton Hotel Sydney; register here: [www.pharmacy-connect.com.au](http://www.pharmacy-connect.com.au)

**26-28 Oct:** Pharmacy Assistant National Conference; QT Gold Coast; for details see: [www.pharmacyassistants.com](http://www.pharmacyassistants.com)

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### Jobs of the Week

- **Group Pharmacist** - Sydney, NSW (Job# 200013851)  
Loads variety role as you move across several pharmacies, Gr8 package.
- **Pharmacist** - Wimmera Region, VIC (Job# 200013815)  
Award-winning pharmacy offering work/lifestyle balance 3hrs N/W of Melbourne.
- **Pharmacist in Charge** - Toowoomba, QLD (Job# 200013760)  
Pharmacist in Charge role to oversee exciting new pharmacy operations.

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