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## Visa changes to lead to GP shortage

**CHANGES** to Australia's working visas will see 800 fewer doctors coming to the country over the next four years, exacerbating GP workforce shortages, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia warns.

Guild National President, George Tambassis, said the reduction in visas for doctors would hit patients from already disadvantaged areas, highlighting the need to allow pharmacists to practice to their full scope to ease pressure on GPs.

"Worsening doctor shortages are only going to leave patients worse off," he said.

"Allowing pharmacists to work more closely with GPs to treat common ailments will free up doctors to spend more time with their patients and treating complex issues.

"Particularly in regional and outer-suburban areas, which will be worst affected by growing GP shortages, it makes sense to allow pharmacists to offer more health services to meet the needs of their



communities.

"Australia has fallen behind the UK and Canada. In those countries pharmacists are allowed to practise at their full scope to prescribe and treat a range of common ailments, which has improved access to health services for patients, reduced waiting times, and reduced costs."

The Guild added the workforce issues are likely to be further impacted by news that the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' (RACGP) Specialist Recognition Program will end next month, which will impact

an estimated 400 British and Canadian GPs who would have traditionally received automatic fellowships, and will instead have to undertake additional training "drastically reducing the number of well-trained doctors coming into Australia through that system".

A Guild spokesperson told **Pharmacy Daily** it was unaware of the reason for the move.

"It is a matter for the RACGP to explain the rationale of its decisions," the spokesperson said.

"Our interest is in patients and their access to health care."

### Today's issue of PD

**Pharmacy Daily** today has three pages of news plus a full page from **Pharmacy Connect**.

### SHPA awards

**THE** Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia has opened nominations for the 2019 SHPA Members' Awards.

The newly introduced national awards are based on member votes, and complement the existing annual SHPA Awards bestowed by the organisation's Board of Directors and various state and territory Branch Awards.

Entries in the Members' Awards are open to all SHPA members, and will undergo a branch-based shortlisting process before winners are chosen through a national member vote.

For more details and criteria see [shpa.org.au](http://shpa.org.au).

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#### References:

<sup>1</sup> Glasier, A. F. et al. Ulipristal acetate versus levonorgestrel for emergency contraception: a randomized non-inferiority trial and meta-analysis. *Lancet*. 2010 Feb 13;375(9714):555-562. Erratum in: *Lancet*. 2014;384(9953):1504.

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## PSA warns of rural danger

AUSTRALIA'S rural pharmacies are under severe threat, according to Pharmaceutical Society of Australia National President, Dr Chris Freeman.

A PSA submission to a consultation being undertaken by the National Rural Health Commissioner argues that rural pharmacy should be considered as a distinct entity, "and its specific challenges and required support structures are not adequately addressed within the discussion paper".

PSA has urgently called on the Commissioner to develop a separate consultation on 'Rural Pharmacy Quality, Access and Distribution', saying the current document "is not fit for purpose

for rural pharmacy".

"Unless we prioritise the supports that are available to our rural practitioners we will potentially lose our rural community pharmacies, our rural pharmacists and a level of service delivery that will only further increase the gap between the outcomes for rural patients and their urban counterparts."

Freeman said PSA held great fears about the sustainability of pharmacy services in rural communities.

"Now is the time for action," he urged, with PSA also recommending a focus on rural pharmacy workforce needs and trials of innovative rural-based care models - [psa.org.au](http://psa.org.au).

## Guild fails pharmacy: AMA

**DISCOUNT** pharmacy groups threaten to undermine the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's arguments against deregulation of the sector, an Australian Medical Association (AMA) representative claims.

In a blog post, AMA WA Councillor, Dr Michael Page, blasted the Guild for enabling the rise of "unprofessional-appearing" and "low-service" pharmacy models.

Page said the Guild had failed the profession "in its silence and inaction" in the face of the corporatisation of pharmacy ownership, which was highlighted in the WA Department of Health's Review of Community Pharmacy Ownership in WA.

"The question becomes: does pharmacist-ownership guarantee the delivery of a high-quality service when a WA pharmacy is (strongly rumoured to be) controlled by a likely non-practising pharmacist in another State who controls dozens of other pharmacies?" he said.

"At least one pharmacy chain – Chemist Warehouse – has achieved such heft that, with its own interests not entirely aligned with those of the Guild, it argues for changes to the rules that restrict pharmacy locations.

"Such changes would represent an existential threat to many of the Guild's members, who would face stiff competition from Chemist Warehouse outlets opening in their immediate vicinities, and would diminish the Guild's standing.

"These trends in the pharmacy industry have been a slap in the face to many hard-working, professional employed pharmacists who increasingly face poor working conditions and uncertain futures, as well as those independent pharmacy owners attempting to deliver high-quality pharmaceutical services.

"They seriously throw into question the ability of the community pharmacy network as it stands to deliver expanded clinical services."

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## Guild, Telstra telehealth deal

**THE** Pharmacy Guild has partnered with Telstra Health to provide telehealth consultations from community pharmacies.

Telehealth is the use of technology to deliver healthcare at a distance, with the partnership aimed to provide pharmacies with access to the HealthNow telehealth platform for patients at a special consultation rate.

HealthNow provides access to online doctors, psychologists and specialists who will work within the patient's schedule, with a HealthNow doctor able to provide a wide range of treatment options as well as medical certificates.

They can also keep the patient's general practitioner up to date.

Consultations are available by phone or video dependant, and if a prescription is required, they will send it directly to the patient's pharmacy.

More info [HERE](#).

## Supermarket pharmacies satisfy in US

**SUPERMARKET** pharmacies lead in customer satisfaction in the USA, according to JD Power's annual pharmacy study.

Polling 12,059 customers who filled or refilled a prescription in the previous three months, the study measures pharmacy customer satisfaction with chain drug, supermarket,

mass-merchant and mail-order pharmacies, using a 1,000 point scale.

Supermarket chain Wegmans scored a 915, topping the charts for a second year in a row, and beating last year's mark of 906.

Second was Publix while Winn-Dixie came in third place, also both supermarkets.

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## Dispensary Corner

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compounding can clearly be used for both good and evil.

An American man has been given an eight year prison sentence over the sale of home-made erectile dysfunction pills.

Californian John Lee smuggled more than \$15 million worth of powdered tadalafil - the active ingredient in Cialis - into the USA from China between 2011 and 2015, using it to make a range of "herbal" remedies.

Some of the products had 14 times the level of the drug found in the prescription medication, with prosecutors estimating Lee made more than 5 million pills over the period.

He was also ordered to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in restitution to customers, some of whom suffered permanent injuries as a result of taking the sex pills.

**CITIZENS** of the Irish capital, Dublin, have been warned to be on the look-out for inebriated pigeons, with the arrival of warm weather heralding the ripening of fruit on Marino pear trees in the city's north.

According to *Dublin Live* as the pears fall to the ground they begin to ferment, making them a particularly intoxicating attraction for the local avians.

Apparently some of the birds get so drunk they just pass out, while others have been spotted "staggering around".

No hangover remedies are recommended, however, with the birds simply recovering by sleeping it off.

## Tassie PATY announced



**BLACKMANS** Bay Discount Drug Store's Bradley Miller will represent Tasmania in the National Finals of the 2019 Pharmacy Guild of Australia/Maxigesic Pharmacy Assistant of the Year Award (PATY).

Miller claimed the State title ahead of 11 other Tasmanian pharmacy assistants, at a workshop on Tue, impressing judges with his pharmacy knowledge, customer service and leadership skills.

Guild National President, George Tambassis, praised Miller's dedication to the community pharmacy sector.

"The calibre of PATY nominees is always extremely high, and each candidate displays a strong commitment to their work and the industry which I am extremely impressed with," Tambassis said.



"Bradley's strong commitment to his role encourages other pharmacy assistants to strive for success and actively contribute to the community pharmacy industry."

Miller (pictured above left) described the win as "completely unexpected".

Meanwhile, Riverside Capital Chemist PA, Jacquie Ritchie (pictured above) was named as the Tasmania Glucojel Super Star Award winner for her "outstanding customer service skills".

Miller will take on the "best of the best" from across the country at the 2019 Pharmacy Assistant National Conference in Brisbane on 12 Oct, while Ritchie will be in the running for the Glucojel Super Star Award National Title, which will be announced at the event.

## Prostate cancer awareness month

**SEPTEMBER** is prostate cancer awareness month, during which Australians are asked to help create consciousness of the disease and raise the funds to assist in the fight against it.

Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australian men, with approximately 3,500 dying from the disease each year.

Factors most strongly linked to an increased chance in developing prostate cancer include age and family history.

Canberra pharmacist Brad Butt has recently developed specialised rehabilitation services for men post prostate removal - work which won him Most Outstanding Community Pharmacist of the Year.



## Travel Specials

**WELCOME** to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals for the pharmacy industry, brought to you by *Flo Travel Nasal Spray*.



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## Flash off to Noumea!

**FANCY** an exotic escape from the winter gloom? Flights from Sydney and Melbourne to Noumea are on sale from just \$449 return for travel next month with Aircalin.

Experience New Caledonia's pristine beaches, warm crystal-clear waters, friendly locals and delightful French cuisine.

Be quick - tickets are only available for sale at this price until 26 Aug - [aircalin.com](http://aircalin.com).

## Antarctica savings

**G ADVENTURES** is offering savings of as much as \$3,720 on an early 2020 Antarctic expedition. Originally priced at \$18,599 per person, this has been slashed to \$14,789 on a 21-day "Spirit of Shackleton" voyage departing 11 Feb.

Trips are on board the intimate 134-passenger *G Expedition* ship, with heavy discounts also available on several other voyages - see your travel agent or 1300 180 969.



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