

## NT pharmacies face workforce crisis

**PHARMACY** owners in the Northern Territory are warning the Territory faces a workforce crisis following Charles Darwin University's (CDU) decision to cut its Bachelor of Pharmacy program (PD 20 Aug).

Pharmacy Guild of Australia NT Branch President, Terry Battalis, called on the Territory Government to work with the profession to find alternative providers to train pharmacists urgently.

"The pharmacy course at CDU (then Northern Territory University) was established in the early 2000s, initially as a joint venture with James Cook University in Queensland and Curtin University in WA, with the support of the Northern Territory Government to address a significant workforce issue – a critical shortage of pharmacists," he said.

"Over this period the CDU

course has produced a small but steady stream of pharmacy graduates, many of whom have stayed in the Territory to complete their internship and to work as registered pharmacists."

Battalis said the Territory's 40 Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme approved pharmacies could be forced to close their doors if they are unable to recruit registered pharmacists.

"Unfortunately we are again looking down the barrel of another critical shortage of pharmacists," he said.

"Community pharmacies employ the majority of pharmacists in the NT. These are the primary healthcare pharmacists who are responsible for providing medicines in a safe and timely manner to those in urban, regional and remote settings.

"These pharmacists are doing



their best to provide a first-rate service despite the current economic pressures, and with an already stretched workforce.

"Ideally we would prefer to train and employ local people as pharmacists rather than turning to skilled migration to fill the gap. A local pharmacy course provides jobs for Territorians."

Battalis said the Government should seek out interstate pharmacy schools who could open a local campus.

## TWC satisfies

**TERRYWHITE** Chemmart (TWC) is closing out 2019 in satisfying fashion, topping the Roy Morgan customer satisfaction ratings for the second month in a row.

The group claimed the Pharmacy of the Month for Oct, with a satisfaction rating of 94%, ahead of Guardian (92%), which had the Pharmacy of the Year title sown up in Aug.

Roy Morgan CEO, Michele Levine, said TWC's recent satisfaction scores boded well for 2020.

"The chemist has been a consistent improver throughout 2019, achieving the largest increase in ratings of all leading chemists compared to a year ago," she said.

"Recent trends suggest that TWC may still have some ratings growth ahead of it."

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## PDL improved incident reporting

**PHARMACY** indemnity insurer, Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL) has updated its online Incident Reporting System to reflect the profession's broadening scope of practice and the types of incidents that may occur.

The new Notification of Incident (NoI) captures key data that can assist members both personally and professionally, PDL claims.

This information also allows PDL and the PDL Master Policy underwriters, if required, to

assist in the prompt management of complaints and notifications.

De-identified and aggregated reporting data may also be used to support positive practice change and advocacy on behalf of the profession.

The new NoI form will soon be available via the PDL member portal and members will be able to complete it at any time, using any device.

Members are encouraged to report errors or complaints as soon as they arise.

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## Dispensary Corner

## Pharmacists are valued

**EMERGENCY** workers were called to an unusual deodorant-related incident in Florida, USA this week, apparently caused when a schoolboy used a little too much body spray.

Students were aboard a school bus in Manatee County when the driver became concerned there might have been something dangerous in the overwhelming manly smell and decided to pull over.

Officers evacuated the vehicle before examining the pheromone-plagued middle school pupils for any adverse effects, and also called for a second bus to pick them up.

Local TV station *ABC Action News* reported that "thankfully no one was transported to the hospital from having too much Axe body spray".

Don't think that couldn't happen here - the same products are sold under the Lynx brand in Australia, meaning an emergency situation from overuse of the underarm stuff could be just around the corner.

**PATIENTS** are increasingly seeing the crucial role pharmacists play in the health system, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Executive Director, Suzanne Greenwood (pictured), believes.

Writing in the Guild's fortnightly member newsletter, *Forefront*, Greenwood reflected on her first 100 days with the organisation, and the dedication of the pharmacists she has encountered.

"I've now been the Executive Director of the Guild for just over 100 days, a fascinating period of induction into the dynamics and complexities of this vital industry.

"In that time, I have visited Guild branches and met countless Guild members, and without fail I have been struck by the commitment and dedication of our pharmacy owners and their staff.

"Walking into so many pharmacies in the past couple of months has also allowed me to have a chat with quite a number of patients, those who come into their local community pharmacy, often at their most vulnerable, and seeking help.

"Many patients are becoming increasingly aware of just what an essential contribution their local pharmacy makes to the overall



health system, and how much more a modern community pharmacy is contributing these days to the broader health system.

"The availability in many pharmacies of consulting rooms, for example, has enabled private health consults and highly personalised care responses.

"And of course, community pharmacy still wants to do more, through enabling pharmacists to practise to their full scope.

"Pharmacist vaccination is a key example.

"A few years ago, no pharmacist in Australia was authorised to vaccinate a patient against the flu.

"Today it is happening in every State and Territory."

## Travel & Cruise Weekly

**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 *Travel & Cruise Weekly*.

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### Perfection in Papeete

**FANCY** a tropical break to recover from the Christmas madness? Entire Travel Group has a spectacular selection of holidays in Tahiti which are on sale until 20 Dec.

Options include 7 nights at the Sofitel Moorea la Ora Beach Resort from \$2,999 per person, or for something a little more upmarket Le Meridien Bora Bora is priced from \$4,999 for a week.

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