



Don't forget pharmacists' actions: PSA

EXTRAORDINARY efforts made by pharmacists in response to the threats posed by bushfires across the country must not be forgotten, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) says.

PSA National President, Dr Chris Freeman, told *Pharmacy Daily* that numerous pharmacists had gone "above and beyond" to support their communities.

The efforts of Malua Bay pharmacist, Raj Gupta, who lost his home in the fires, but opened his pharmacy, despite not having electricity, and dispensing medications to patients in need, telling them to come back after power is restored to the town so he can ensure their prescriptions are recorded appropriately.

"What we have seen over the last few days, and in the months preceding, are pharmacists going above and beyond for their communities," Freeman said.

"The example of Raj Gupta from Malua Bay [highlighted on SBS News] is one that is replicated across the bushfire zones across Australia.

"It shows the importance of community pharmacy, of community pharmacists and

how when the chips are down communities pull together to help one another.

"We have been in close contact with a number of pharmacists at the front line of the bush fire emergency, and we have been in close contact not only with the Commonwealth Minister for Health's office, the Department of Health, and over the weekend the Australian Defence Force to assist in logistical support.

"It is times like this that we see pharmacists step up time and time again, these actions won't be forgotten."

While pharmacists have been working hard to support their communities in response to the fires, Freeman said there was a need for state, territory and federal governments to take steps to investigate how they can remove barriers to emergency dispensing.

"At this time we need to focus on the immediate logistical support that pharmacists on the front line need, then we can focus on ensuring the need for adequate disaster planning involving community pharmacy, and reducing the barriers that pharmacists face in providing



emergency supplies of medicines," he said.

PSA Pharmacist of the Year 2019, Peter Crothers, from Bourke, NSW, hit out at state and territory governments for failing to engage pharmacists in disaster planning.

"Community pharmacists are routinely ignored by all states' and territories' disaster planning frameworks, and yet are routinely on the front lines when it comes to actual response," he said on Twitter.

"In the Tasmanian fires GPs were helicoptered in, while pharmacists had to drive through the fire zone."

Pharmacists impacted by the bushfires can contact the Pharmacists' Support Service on 1300 244 910 between 8am and 11pm every day, or **CLICK HERE** to access resources designed to help deal with traumatic events.

Today's issue of *PD*

Pharmacy Daily today has two pages of news.

Create audit trail

PHARMACISTS across the country are being urged to pay close attention to rules around the emergency provision of prescription medications as bushfires have forced thousands from their homes.

Former Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Kos Sclavos, told *Pharmacy Daily* that "every pharmacist needs to be aware" of the Commonwealth Department of Health's advice for the supply of medicines in areas affected natural disasters, issued on 24 Dec.

He noted displaced patients were moving to family and friends in areas outside bushfire zones, and few were likely to have taken prescriptions with them when fleeing their homes.

Sclavos encouraged pharmacists to document products dispensed under emergency provisions to create an audit trail that the Commonwealth can review.

"My reading of official document is that only emergency supply (3 days supply and a private prescription) can be facilitated," he said, urging pharmacists to comply with the legislation.

Pharmacy staff member assaulted

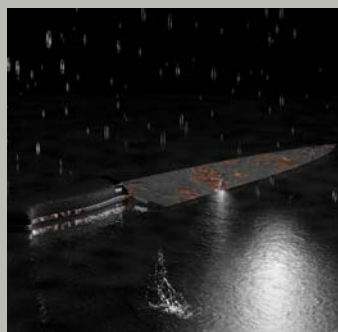
POLICE on Sydney's North Shore are hunting two armed bandits after a robbery at a pharmacy that left one employee injured on Thu 02 Jan.

The two men, dressed in black, were armed with a machete and a screwdriver, entered the Amcal Pharmacy on High Street, Willoughby, at about 8.30pm and demanded cash and prescription medications before fleeing the scene on foot.

The Daily Telegraph reported the bandits punched a 41-year-old male pharmacy employee in the face, knocking him to the ground during the robbery.

The newspaper quoted an anonymous staff member as saying "we're all in shock".

"It's the first time anything like



this has happened - obviously it's very concerning," the employee said.

North Shore Police Crime Manager, Simon Jones, said detectives were working with other organisations to investigate possible links to other armed robberies across the state.

TGA closes office

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has closed its Symonston office today in response to poor air quality in Canberra.

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Dispensary Corner

COULD this be the next big thing in pharmacy-based sleep therapy services?

Police in Missouri, USA, have confirmed reports from a mattress shop where an employee opening up for business last week found a woman wandering the store.

The salesperson called police, and when officers arrived the unexpected visitor told them she had been testing out the mattress the night before and fallen into a deep slumber.

The store declined to press charges for trespassing, and so the woman was escorted off the premises, according to the *St Louis Dispatch*.

"That's honestly the best mattress endorsement we've ever heard," the police department posted on social media on Fri.

Reports don't say whether the well-rested woman ever returned to buy the mattress.

THERE'S been a breakthrough in the ongoing health battle against cigarettes in the USA, where a major employer has announced it will decline applications from prospective staff who are nicotine users.

Moving and storage operator U-Haul says it's implementing the policy as part of its campaign to "establish one of the healthiest corporate cultures in the USA and Canada".

The company employs over 30,000 people, with the policy applying in 21 states where it is lawful to decline hiring individuals who use nicotine.

AMA health fears

THE Australian Medical Association (AMA) is warning the impacts of bushfires in NSW and Victoria could put previously healthy people at risk of developing serious illnesses.

Federal Gov aid for ACT

DETAILS outlining how 100,000 Commonwealth-funded face masks from the National Medical Stockpile (NMS) will be distributed in the ACT are expected to be announced within the next 24 hours, as bushfire smoke threatens the health of residents in the capital.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia ACT Branch President, Simon Blacker, said the Commonwealth face masks were expected to arrive in Canberra today, with discussions on how they will be distributed set to take place throughout the day.

Blacker said that while no decision had been made at the time of publication, "community pharmacies would be well placed" to distribute the masks to vulnerable patients impacted by the smoke.

The move follows the Federal Government's announcement that 450,000 P2 masks from the NMS

would be sent to Victoria to assist frontline workers and those at risk in bushfire affected communities, Commonwealth Minister for Health, Greg Hunt said on Sat.

"Although these P2 masks have been held in the NMS for use in pandemics, I have made them available today because of the urgent need to assist frontline workers operating in bushfire-affected communities," Hunt said.

While the ACT Government has yet to define who would qualify to access the 100,000 masks, the Commonwealth Department of Health noted that those most at risk of significant health effects of smoke include: people over 65 years; children 14 years and younger; pregnant women; and people with existing heart and lung conditions.

Blacker noted that pharmacies in the ACT were expecting fresh supplies of face masks later today.

Corum cashflow hit by PharmX dispute

LISTED pharmacy software specialist, Corum Group Limited, has announced it does not expect payment of an outstanding \$2.2 million debt until at least Feb 2020.

The money is owed to Corum due to its stake in the PharmX pharmacy ordering platform, which is also partly owned by FRED IT Group, Mountaintop Systems and the parent company of Simple Retail.

According to an ASX update just before Christmas, the \$2.2 million owed to Corum "has been withheld due to a significant dispute between other investors".

The Supreme Court in Vic has ruled that PharmX must distribute dividends from 2017

and 2018, despite two holders in the PharmX Unit Trust using their combined votes to block payments.

Corum has only been drawn into the case because of its 30% stake in PharmX, with the dispute centring on Telstra's 50% ownership of FRED IT which was claimed to have impacted the PharmX trust agreement.

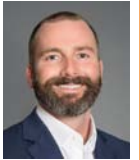
Subsequent to the judgement ordering the release of the unpaid revenue, investors have now been ordered to undertake mediation on unrelated elements of the case.

"As a consequence, Corum will not receive payment before that mediation process has concluded," the company said.



Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Jack Brown**, Partner and NSW Sales Manager at Australian Pharmacy Group.



Getting the Right People in Your Corner

BUYING a pharmacy will be one of the biggest financial decisions you make this year, and possibly in your life. So, it's wise to surround yourself with a team of advisors that are industry specialists.

This seems like an obvious statement, however, all too often we're involved in transactions where the purchaser's third party advisors are not pharmacy specialists and consequently do not have the necessary expertise to properly advise their client.

There are three main advisors that are particularly important to a pharmacy transaction:

Accountant

Using a specialist pharmacy accountant to review the financials will assist in identifying future growth opportunities as well as areas of potential concern. It's important that your accountant understands current pharmacy trends and can apply accurate benchmarks to KPI's.

Solicitor

Pharmacy sale contracts are unique. There are numerous speciality clauses that are required and several pharmacy applications must be submitted as part of the ownership transfer. Incorrectly prepared contracts and/or applications regularly cause significant delays.

Finance broker

Dealing with the banks has become increasingly challenging in recent years. Using a speciality pharmacy finance broker enables you to achieve the best possible loan terms for your situation.