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## Academics offer bushfire support

**ACADEMICS** from pharmacy schools across Australia are offering their services to assist pharmacists affected by the bushfires in NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

In an open letter published on LinkedIn, the Council of Pharmacy Schools of Australia and New Zealand (CPS) President, Professor Peter Little AM, expressed the academic fraternity's desire to support bushfire recovery efforts.

"As a start, Professor Greg Kyle, from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) proposed that currently registered academic pharmacists could provide some temporary locum relief to pharmacies in affected areas," he said.

"The pharmacists would be allocated to pharmacies based on greatest need as assessed by the state branch office of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia (or the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia, for hospitals) and provide a locum pharmacist



for two to three days to allow pharmacists to deal with personal insurance requirements, family matters or just grieve the tragedy with their communities.

"We are aware that some universities have offered paid leave to health professionals to assist in appropriate ways to address this major national emergency and tragedy.

"For example, QUT has approved two weeks special leave for three pharmacists to undertake this

role. QUT will be providing paid leave and the pharmacists will be personally paying for travel and accommodation costs as their donation to the recovery.

"Other Schools of Pharmacies are currently seeking the necessary support from within their university structures to allow support as proposed by QUT."

Little added the CPS was also interested to learn of any other assistance academic pharmacists can offer the profession.

Today's issue of *PD*

*Pharmacy Daily* today has two pages of news.

## Hunt thanks pharmacy

**HERCULEAN** efforts made by pharmacists to support their communities during the bushfire crisis have not gone unnoticed, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Executive Director, Suzanne Greenwood, said in a message to pharmacy owners.

Greenwood said she and Guild National President, George Tambassis, met with Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, on Tue, who asked them to pass on his thanks for the work pharmacists have done to support their communities.

Greenwood added there was a need for community pharmacy to be involved in future disaster planning.

## Conditions stabilise for Vic pharmacies

**MOVES** to reopen roads in bushfire-affected parts of Victoria, is enabling pharmacies to get fresh stock of vital medicines, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, says.

Providing an update on conditions across the state, Tassone told *Pharmacy Daily* that

"things are a little more stable this week in comparison to a pharmacy perspective during the Victorian bushfire disaster".

He added there have been no reports of any structural damage to pharmacies in the state as a result of the fires, however, many stores have experienced business interruptions caused by the fires.

## Guild praises departing Hodgman

**OUTGOING** Tasmanian Premier, Will Hodgman (pictured), has been praised by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia for his "readiness to listen" to the views of pharmacists.

Responding to Hodgman's decision to step away from politics, announced on Tue, Guild Tasmanian Branch Vice President, Helen O'Byrne, said the state's pharmacists and community had experienced "very real gains" during his premiership.

"His understanding of, and willingness to engage with, the issues relevant to community pharmacy and the impact on the broader Tasmanian community has been much valued by the Guild," she said.

"During his time as Premier, community pharmacies have evolved beyond solely dispensing medications, to become an acknowledged part of the broader health system in



Tasmania.

"The easy accessibility of a broad range of immunisation services available to Tasmanians through their local pharmacy is a major example of this.

"We look forward to continuing our positive working relationship with the Tasmanian Government and the new Premier.

"We wish Hodgman and his family all the very best for the future."

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## Dispensary Corner

**DESPITE** the heroic efforts pharmacists around the globe put in to improve medicines safety, they're rarely the star of Hollywood movies.

While that is unlikely to change anytime soon, Britain's National Health Service (NHS) is doing its best to highlight pharmacists' scope of practice with a series of new 1950s B-movie-style posters, to encourage patients with minor ailments to visit their local pharmacy rather than GP for treatment.

The campaign, which will launch on 20 Jan, uses the tag-line, "Take the drama out of minor illnesses - see a pharmacist".

NHS England Head of Marketing, Phil Bastable, said the promotion aims to help the NHS help patients.

"This year we're asking the public to 'take the drama out of minor illnesses' with an exciting new campaign creative, that we hope will really cut through and change behaviour," he said.

"Community pharmacists are invaluable NHS experts, often underutilised because not everybody understands how qualified they are to help."

One campaign poster features an image of a bloodshot eye with the title, Night of the Itchy Eye, with movie-style credits saying "Produced by an Infection or Allergy, starring a Bloodshot or Watery Eye with a Burning or Gritty Sensation", before urging patients to "See a pharmacist."

## CEO delivers in bushfires

**WITH** pharmacists in regional parts of NSW and Victoria directly impacted by the ongoing bushfire crisis, Advantage Pharmacy CEO, Steven Kastrinakis, has been on the frontline supporting owners by delivering supplies to affected stores.

Kastrinakis worked in the Advantage Pharmacy in fire-affected Bairnsdale, Victoria, on Mon 06 Jan, to assist after residents had been evacuated on Fri 02 Jan.

"When the pharmacy was also able to reopen, the staff were inundated with requests for respiratory inhalers to help with breathing difficulties as a result of the dense smoke haze and poor air quality," he said.

"The smoke travelled hundreds of kilometres, to the point that pharmacies in surrounding towns were also inundated with similar requests for respiratory inhalers and high quality face masks to filter out the fine particles in smoke.

"Most healthy people can withstand a short-term exposure to the pollution, however those



with pre-existing conditions such as asthma may need to take extra precautions.

"I knew I'd be able to source and distribute P2/N95 face masks quickly to donate to affected pharmacies and offer to patients free of charge."

Kastrinakis (**pictured**) personally drove to a supplier and stocked up with 5,000 face masks, which were immediately distributed to the worst affected pharmacies within the network.

A number of other pharmacy groups and industry partners have lent their support to pharmacies, with Arrotex Pharmaceuticals providing a further 11,000 masks, which have been distributed to pharmacy groups this week.

## Blackmores match \$100k RFS donation

**BLACKMORES** has matched a \$100,000 donation to the Northern Beaches Rural Fire Service (RFS), made by one of the company's long-serving former employees, Sister Mercie Whellan.

While the company has had a program in place to match charitable donations made by staff for more than 40 years, Blackmores Director, Marcus Blackmore offered to equal the retired Director's contribution, as she celebrated her 100th

birthday this week.

Accepting the combined \$200,000 donation, Northern Beaches RFS Treasurer, Dr Ken Hughes, thanked Whellan and the Blackmores for their support.

"We've never had a donation of this size and we're so pleased that the money will go directly to helping our volunteer brigades, which includes buying equipment as well as further developing initiatives to help keep our community safe", he said.

## 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 *Travel & Cruise Weekly*.

## Travel & Cruise Weekly

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### UTracks Euro savings

**EUROPEAN** holiday specialist, UTracks, is offering savings of up to \$800 per cabin on its Lyon and Provence Bike and Boat spring sailings in Mar and Apr.

The new itinerary along the Rhone will allow guests to take in the culinary delights served up in Lyon, cycle along dedicated bike paths through orchards and sample the wines of the vineyards of the Cotes du Rhone.

Discounted rates are available to the first 30 bookings on departures on 21 and 28 Mar, and 04 and 11 Apr.

**CLICK HERE** to book now.

### Stay 3/Pay 2 Sri Lanka

**THE** Unique Tourism Collection is offering the chance to stay at Sri Lanka's number one hotel, the Water Garden, Sigiriya, for three nights for the price of two.

The offer is available for stays between 01 Mar and 15 Jul.

To book email [info@uniquetourism.com](mailto:info@uniquetourism.com) or call 02 9211 6590.