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Pharmacy sector welcomes stimulus

THE government's new \$17.6 billion stimulus package will help support pharmacists through the COVID-19 crisis, with peak industry bodies saying the funding is "welcome and needed".

The announcement includes grants for small and medium businesses of up to \$25,000, an increase of the instant asset write-off threshold to \$150,000, and the abolition of waiting periods for social security sickness payments for casual workers.

A time-limited investment

incentive will support economic growth by accelerating depreciation deductions, while welfare recipients will receive a one-off \$750 cash payment.

The payments for businesses will apply to those which withhold tax on their employees' salary and wages, with a tax-free payment of 50% of the amount withheld.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, said the measures were timely and necessary, "at a time when many community pharmacies

- along with other businesses across the economy - are feeling stress and facing challenges thrown up by the onset of COVID-19".

He said the package would help directly support Australia's 5,700 community pharmacies and the over 60,000 staff directly employed by the industry.

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia President, Chris Freeman, said the measures would help many pharmacies continue to provide much needed care to their patients.

Earlier in the week the government also announced a major health funding package to help deal with COVID-19, including the acceleration of electronic prescriptions and funding for home medicine services.

Freeman said all of the measures were "essential to ensure pharmacists can continue their crucial role protecting Australians".



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*Compared to over the counter medicines and equivalent to intranasal corticosteroid sprays. Always read the label. Follow the directions for use. If symptoms persist, talk to your health professional. Research conducted and funded by Rhinocort. Efficacy of Budesonide compared to intranasal corticosteroids and antihistamines in allergic rhinitis. November 2019. Available at Rhinocort.com.au *Registered Trademark. JORH18207M.

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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news, a front cover wrap for Omnicell plus a full page from:

- Amcal

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Canberra CCPF

THE 13th Capital Chemist Partners Forum (CCPF) will take place this weekend in Canberra, with representatives from the group's 50 stores to gather to reflect on the past and future.

Taking place this Sat and Sun, on the agenda will be the group's strong results, which have seen hikes in professional services (up 22.4%), retail sales (up 6%), script numbers (up 3.4%), and customer counts (up 2.5%).

Taking place at East Hotel, also discussed will be the recovery of local communities hit hard by the recent New South Wales bushfire crisis, as well as planning and changes to workflow in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Guest speakers include Pharmacy Guild of Australia Executive Director, Suzanne Greenwood, along with Queensland University of Technology Business School's Professor Gary Mortimer, as well as representatives from major sponsors Symbion Pharmacy and Arrotex.

Vic pharmacist meningococcal jabs

VICTORIAN pharmacists will now be able to administer Meningococcal ACWY to people aged 15 years and over, under new arrangements announced yesterday by the Vic state government.

The changes have also seen the lowering of the minimum age for pharmacist-administered measles/mumps/rubella and whooping cough vaccines lowered by a year, to people aged 15 and up.

The expanded immunisation abilities will become effective from 01 Apr, while on the same date previously announced changes



lowering the age for pharmacist-administered influenza vaccines to 10 years and above (**PD 11 Oct 2019**) will also be implemented.

Changes to the *Secretary Approval: Pharmacist Immunisers* regulations will also allow greater flexibility for pharmacists to provide vaccinations via mobile and outreach services of a hospital, pharmacy or pharmacy depot, with all of the developments welcomed by the Pharmaceutical Society of

Australia.

"At a time when our health care system is under extreme pressure, increasing options for Victorians to access vaccination services is extremely helpful," said Pharmaceutical Society of Australia Victorian President John Jackson.

"Pharmacists are well trained in the administration of these vaccines and are more accessible to the community than any other health provider," he said.

COVID webpage

THE Department of Defence has established a COVID-19 webpage, designed to help closely monitor the pandemic at home and around the globe.

The page will provide information on testing, confirmed cases and where to seek help.

The website was established as part of Whole-of-Government guidance, and will be updated daily at 5.30pm - **CLICK HERE** to access.

AusCann names new medical advisor

LISTED medicinal cannabis company AusCann has appointed a new Chief Medical Advisor, Dr Marc Russo, to help accelerate its medical engagement program.

Russo will aid the business to pursue its medical strategy, which includes medical education, clinical evidence generation and clinical insights, as the company develops new product pipelines and intellectual property.

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Dispensary Corner

WALKING the dog once a day can be great for cardiovascular health, but if you ever feel the need to up the tempo, resist the temptation to walk your lion through the suburbs.

That's what people thought they were seeing when they spotted this creature (pictured) strolling in the streets of Spain.

Alarm turned to bemusement when he turned out to simply be a canine with a funky haircut.

Bags not giving him a pat to find out for sure.



THE challenge of tackling the COVID-19 crisis is a complex and urgent proposition, made even more difficult when the conference proposing to come up with the way to stop its spread is cancelled due to, you guessed it, COVID-19.

The British Council on Foreign Relations dropped a roundtable conference which was meant to take place last week, with the meeting's organiser saying "the Council on Foreign Relations, like many other organisations, has suspended all in-person events effectively today through at least 03 Apr...our foremost concern is for the health and safety of Council members".

Let's just hope there is no meeting scheduled to talk about ways to stop COVID-19 prevention meetings from being cancelled.

Sigma pulls out of APP

SIGMA Healthcare has confirmed its withdrawal from next week's Pharmacy Guild of Australia APP conference on the Gold Coast.

The move follows a decision by Sigma to also postpone this year's Amcal and Guardian Retail conference (**PD 11 Mar**), which was also scheduled to take place in the lead-up to APP.

"Sigma's number one consideration is to limit the potential risk to attendees, given the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Australia," the company said.

"This decision is supported by recent events including the World Health Organization's declaration of a pandemic, and recent confirmed

cases in Australia and Queensland in particular," a statement added.

A spokesperson for Sigma said it was unclear at this stage whether the pullout would impact the planned participation of the company's CEO, Mark Hooper, who had previously been announced as part of a key industry panel at APP.

Hooper, who is also Chair of the National Pharmaceutical Services Association, continues to be listed on the APP agenda as a member of the key State of the Industry panel taking place at 8.30 on Thu 19 Mar.

Sigma Healthcare is also still highlighted on the APP2020 website as a "Principal Sponsor" of the event, alongside Pfizer, Arrotex, GuildSuper and Guild Insurance.

Cultural safety strategy launched

A COMBINED meeting of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme last month has seen the release of an ambitious strategy to embed cultural safety into the Australian health system.

A total of 43 entities including AHPRA, the Pharmacy Board of Australia, Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander health experts, regulators and other health organisations, have backed the plan which aims to create a "culturally safe health workforce through nationally consistent standards, codes and guidelines across all registered health practitioners in Australia".

For more see ahpra.gov.au.



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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.

18 Mar: AACP Accredited Pharmacists' Forum 2020; Sofitel Gold Coast, Broadbeach QLD; www.aacp.com.au/events/forum-2020/

19 - 22 Mar: APP 2020; Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre; www.apconference.com

04 - 05 Apr: VIC/TAS Annual Therapeutic Update, 381 Royal Parade, Parkville, Melbourne; for more information visit: www.psa.org.au

18 - 19 Apr: Pharmeducation Clinical Update; Holiday Inn, Potts Point, Sydney: register at www.pharmeducation.com.au

06 May: APC & ANMAC Interprofessional Colloquium 2020; QT Hotel, Canberra; for more info visit: www.ipecolloquium.com/

19 - 21 June: AACP 16th Annual Consultant Clinical Pharmacy Seminar; Hilton Adelaide; www.aacp.com.au/events/conpharm-2020

18 -19 Jul: Pharmeducation Clinical Update 2020; Brisbane Airport Conference Centre; www.pharmeducation.com.au

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