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## Professional optimism hits new high

**OPTIMISM** about community pharmacy in Australia has reached an all time high, the latest edition of the University of Technology Sydney Pharmacy Barometer reveals.

The annual confidence reading taken in Sep and Oct 2020, climbed 17.8 points to 126.8 out of 200 from the previous high of 109 in 2019.

On the back of the introduction of the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA) the authors noted that pharmacists were more confident in the potential economic growth of their business in the medium-term.

The barometer's authors noted that pharmacists "have apparently accepted the terms of the 7CPA and adapted to a changing workforce both professionally and economically due to COVID-19".

"Pharmacists satisfaction economically and professionally with the 7CPA was neutral, most likely due to it being relatively new

and them still needing to become accustomed, and experiencing the potential financial and professional impacts," they said.

"Owner/owner managers were the most satisfied economically (22%) and professionally (29%) most likely due to the introduction of guaranteed dispensing remuneration while employed pharmacists were the least satisfied economically (6%) and professionally (9%)."

However, almost 70% of respondents said they did not

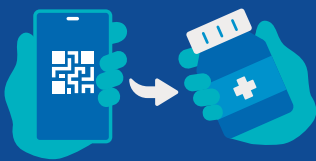
support or were dissatisfied with the removal of payment for clinical interventions in the 7CPA.

In terms of the distribution of funding for dispensing and professional services, one-in-four felt greater funding should be allocated to dispensing fees, while 36% highlighted discontent with the level of funding that had been provided to professional services in the agreement, indicating that greater funding should have been allocated to professional services fees.

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### Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news, plus a full page from Sigma Pharmaceuticals.

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Simon - Pharmacist

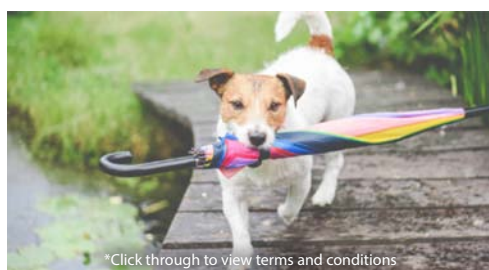


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## Pharmacy key to community immunity

**COMMUNITY** pharmacies' accessibility for patients living in rural and remote areas will be crucial to boosting uptake of COVID-19 vaccinations, under the recalibrated national rollout, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Tasmanian Branch President, Helen O'Byrne, believes.

Welcoming the National Cabinet decision to incorporate pharmacies in the administration of COVID-19 immunisations in areas where there is no, or limited, access to vaccines (**PD 26 Apr**), O'Byrne said it would be a good thing for community protection against the pandemic virus.

"All pharmacies identified under the rural, remote and very remote categories are now an option for the States and Territories to turn on in the recalibrated rollout," she said.

"Using these pharmacies will help to ensure that communities in these areas are not disadvantaged by any focus on mass vaccination sites in



metropolitan areas."

O'Byrne added that pharmacists will have a key role in educating the public about the vaccines.

"Pharmacists are also able to assist with vaccine hesitancy by providing the most up to date clinical information, regardless of where the service is undertaken," she said.

"We have done the same training

as doctors and nurse immunisers and many pharmacies have extending opening hours, a benefit for many people.

"Clearly if you want community immunity then access is a huge factor, and no healthcare professionals are more accessible than community pharmacists," the Tasmanian Guild leader noted.

### Wholelife invite

**PHARMACY** owners with a passion for holistic health, retail excellence and leading positive change can secure an invite to a detailed information session about Sigma Healthcare's Wholelife Pharmacy franchise at the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference on 22 May - see **page five** for info.

### Palipana at APP

**QUEENSLAND'S** Australian of the Year and Doctors with Disabilities advocate, Dr Dinesh Palipana OAM, is set to speak at the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference (APP) next month.

Palipana will share his story of how he became Queensland's first quadriplegic medical graduate.

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## Guild Update

### Glucjel Bears are coming

**CUSTOMERS** will soon see a new addition to the famed Gold Cross Glucjel range with the introduction of Glucjel Bears.

Glucjel Bears will join the ever-popular Glucjel Jelly Beans which after 80 years on pharmacy shelves are firmly entrenched as Australia's favourite jelly beans.

The General Manager of Gold Cross, Jason Rose, said the new product filled an identified gap in the market.

"We are proud of this great new product and of the research and development work that has gone into producing a product that we are confident will be a winner with pharmacy customers across the country," he said.

"The jelly confectionery market has been crying out for a great product and Glucjel Bears are just the thing to meet demand in this area.

"The Glucjel brand is synonymous with products of the very highest quality and value and the Glucjel Bears will further build on that great reputation."

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## PI insurance market heating up

**PHARMACISTS** are seeing increased competition in the professional indemnity (PI) insurance market, with the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) launching a new members only product.

The new policy, brokered by BMS Group, aims to offer a "low cost and competitive" option for PSA members, with cover starting from \$170.50 per annum.

In a statement released last week the PSA said it had moved into the PI market to meet demands from members.

"We've actively listened to member feedback and recognise the significant expense associated with necessities that members require to practice, coupled with stagnant wage growth in the profession," the PSA said.

"We strive to address those concerns and reduce the barriers to pharmacists practicing to full scope.

"PSA Member Professional Indemnity Insurance supports medicine safety and helps to protect the community.

"The PSA Member Insurance program helps to fund activities that educate pharmacists on



managing risk and reducing medicine error, like training, CPD activities, reports and representation to government.

"PSA writes the guidelines of practice for pharmacists and is perfectly placed to support pharmacists managing risk."

However, pharmacist PI market leader with more than 29,000 members, Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL), is also moving to compete on cost, offering "\$75 off your insurance premium in your first five years of general registration".

PDL is a not-for-profit organisation

wholly owned by its members.

Employee pharmacists union group, Professional Pharmacists Australia is also offering PI cover which it notes is in compliance with Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) requirements and is backed by Berkley Insurance, with its PPA Protect policy starting from \$243 per annum.

All three providers offer access to professional incident and claims support services.

The PSA is also offering its student and graduate members complimentary PI cover.

### Nugen Pharmacy in administration

**WESTERN** Sydney-based Nugen Pharmacy, has "ceased operations indefinitely" and administrators have been appointed.

A virtual first meeting of creditors of Nugen Health Pty Ltd will take place on 30 Apr at 2.30pm AEST, to consider whether to appoint a committee of inspection.

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## Dispensary Corner

**THERE** are some things you just should never buy on eBay, Etsy or through other online retailers - and Stoner Patch Gummies should be on that list.

The aptly named lollies, which contain "significant levels of cannabis", have come to the attention of Irish authorities after a least one teenager was hospitalised after experiencing side-effects from the tropical flavoured treats.

Food Safety Authority of Ireland CEO, Dr Pamela Byrne, described the sale of cannabis containing confectionary as a sinister attempt to flog narcotics to children.

She also warned the public of the dangers of chowing down on lollies laced with cannabis, and urged consumers to only buy food from reputable sources.



## Pharmacists critical in aged care

**PHARMACISTS** have a vital role to play in reducing the high prevalence of adverse drug events in residential aged care facilities, researchers from the University of Tasmania believe.

In a systematic review published in the *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*, the authors found pharmacist-led interventions including medication reviews and educational programs were among the most common approaches to reducing medication-related harm in older people living in nursing homes.

The authors found that medication reviews, conducted as either a single component or as part of a multicomponent pharmacist-led intervention, were frequently reported to reduce adverse drug events such as cognitive impairment, falls, agitation and anticholinergic drug burden.

"This review's findings indicate that pharmacist interventions appear to improve medication safety in residential aged care facilities, based on observed reductions in adverse drug events especially when the provision of care involves a combination of strategies and collaboration with other healthcare providers," the



authors said.

"As experts in pharmacotherapy, pharmacists are well-suited to perform medication reviews and determine underlying causes of drug-related issues and provide solutions to avoid them.

"Pharmacist-led medication review is recognised as an important intervention for reducing adverse drug events in older people, thus improving patient safety.

"Similarly, older people in residential aged care facilities

benefit most from medication reviews as they are more prone to experiencing adverse drug events."

The authors added that the implementation of pharmacist-led interventions in collaboration with physicians may decrease the burden on the healthcare system.

They added that future studies would need to examine how often pharmacists need to perform interventions that may curb instances of medication-related harm in patients living in residential aged care facilities.

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