

## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news plus a full page from Willach.

## Tas PPE pledge

THE Tasmanian Government is making an additional \$2 million available to pharmacies and GPs through its Primary Healthcare Grant scheme.

The funding aims to ensure community pharmacies and GP clinics are COVID-ready as the island state prepares to reopen its borders.

The grant will support pharmacies to "maintain personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies and to facilitate the home delivery of medication to vulnerable clients".

Tasmanian Minister for Health, Jeremy Rockliff, said "GPs and community pharmacies will play a vital part in supporting the recovery of those who test positive for COVID-19 in their home setting, and will be key to providing ongoing care for people's usual care needs".

## Futurist joins APP2022 speaker line up

SOCIAL researcher and futurist, Mark McCrindle, is set to discuss emerging trends and a snapshot of Australia's pharmaceutical industry, at the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference 2022 (APP2022).

APP2022 Convenor, Kos Sclavos, said McCrindle will present the latest demographic data and new research commissioned by the Pharmacy

Guild of Australia.

Using his own unique style, Mark will provide a snapshot of the changes, trends, challenges and opportunities for the pharmaceutical industry," Sclavos said.

Earlybird registration for APP2022 is now open, with the event offering a 100% COVID refund guarantee.

**CLICK HERE** to register.

# Woolworths moves to take over API

**SUPERMARKET** powerhouse Woolworths is looking to gazump rival retail giant Wesfarmers with an \$872 million bid to acquire pharmaceutical wholesaler, Australian Pharmaceutical Industries (API) (PD breaking news).

The Woolworths non-binding transaction proposal represents a 20 cents per share premium over the price agreed between API and Wesfarmers under the Scheme of Implementation Deed (SID) announced last month (PD 08 Nov).

In a statement to the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) Woolworths CEO, Brad Banducci, said there was "a compelling strategic rationale to support" its planned acquisition of API, adding it would provide benefits for customers and pharmacists.

"If successful, we will continue to support API's community pharmacy partners to deliver better experiences for both customers and pharmacists," he said.

"We will also work to strengthen API's wholesale and distribution business to ensure Australians continue to have timely, cost-effective access to a full range of Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and other medicines, via their

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community pharmacy, regardless of where they live.

"We are strongly committed to supporting the community pharmacy model including pharmacy ownership and location rules to ensure pharmacies are well represented in all communities, especially in regional and remote parts of Australia."

Under an indicative timetable included in the bid, Woolworths aims to commence due diligence on Mon 06 Dec, with the aim of completing the transaction in the second quarter of 2022.

Having commenced trading this morning at \$1.50 a share, API stock jumped to a three-year high of \$1.71 this morning.

Responding to this morning's offer, the API Board noted that it was "a superior proposal" to the Wesfarmers' bid, but stressed "there is no certainty that the engagement between API and Woolworths will result in a change of control transaction or an offer capable of acceptance by API shareholders".

"The API Board has not agreed with Woolworths a binding process or timetable and intends to discuss these aspects further



with Woolworths," API said in a statement to the ASX.

"The Board also notes that the Wesfarmers SID includes a matching right in favour of Wesfarmers, which is exercisable by Wesfarmers before API enters into any binding agreement in respect of a competing proposal."

**MEANWHILE**, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia has raised questions over the "possible implications for community pharmacies and the patients they serve".

"Why is a company with interests in the alcohol, tobacco, gambling and nightclub industries wanting to move into healthcare?" a Guild spokesperson asked.

"How will it ensure the successful community pharmacy model, which is custodian of the PBS, is protected and maintained?"



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## Empathy key to COVAX success: PDL

AS AUSTRALIA moves into the next phase of its COVID-19 vaccination (COVAX) campaign pharmacists are being urged to prepare for conversations with vaccine hesitant patients.

In a practice alert issued last night, indemnity insurer, Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL) stressed that pharmacists will “need to be empathetic with these patients and be prepared to handle discussions and discontent regarding vaccination”.

“Discontent may be understandable given an individual’s anxieties or frustration,” PDL said.

“We hope pharmacists remain professional and offer support and advice in a non-judgemental manner.”

The insurer also warned pharmacists that patients coming in for vaccines solely to meet employment obligations may seek to have vaccination records falsified

to say they have received their jabs, without having them administered.

“While rare, pharmacists should be alert to a very small number of people seeking to manipulate a pharmacist to achieve a vaccination record without vaccination, through means such as a bribe or manipulating vaccines when a pharmacist is distracted,” the company said.

“Such events need to be reported to the appropriate authorities.”

PDL added that pharmacists should use the Australian Immunisation Record (AIR) as “the source of truth”, and review it prior to administering vaccines.

“PDL continues to receive reports of people lying or being confused about past vaccine numbers or brands,” the alert said.

“There may be some public perception that Moderna Spikevax may be a more effective vaccine leading patients to seek another brand of vaccine or an extra dose of



a particular brand of vaccine.

“Checking the AIR can prevent this occurrence.”

While some patients may be vaccine hesitant, the insurer noted that “a very small number of parents are reportedly seeking to have children under 12 [years] vaccinated by falsifying consent or booking details”.

PDL has advised pharmacists to monitor the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) guidance for any changes to the COVAX booster program.

## Medcure cops \$106k import fine

NSW-BASED herbal product supplier, KL4 Pty Ltd, trading as Medcure, has been fined \$106,560 in relation to the alleged importation of Ayurvedic medicines containing Schedule 10 substances, in breach of the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989*.

The TGA noted that the products were not listed on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods at the time of importation, adding the products were “of such danger to health they are banned from sale, supply and use in Australia”.

The regulator noted that Ayurvedic medicines (also known as traditional medicines) are generally required to meet the same standards of quality and safety as other medications in Australia.

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## COVID treatment gets provisional nod

**ROCHE** Products Pty Ltd's Actemra (tocilizumab) has been granted provisional approval to be used as a treatment for COVID-19, by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

The medication, which is currently listed on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG) for use in the treatment of various types of arthritis and inflammatory conditions, is the fourth COVID-19 treatment to be given regulatory approval in Australia.

"This monoclonal antibody treatment is now also provisionally approved for the intravenous treatment of confirmed COVID-19 in hospitalised adults aged 18

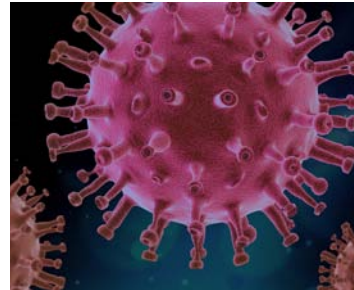
years and older who are receiving systemic corticosteroids and require supplemental oxygen or mechanical ventilation," the TGA said.

"Tocilizumab is not intended to be used as a substitute for vaccination against COVID-19.

"Unlike other COVID-19 treatments, tocilizumab does not directly target SARS-CoV-2 proteins.

"Instead, it reduces inflammation by blocking the interleukin-6 receptor, thereby helping to slow the effects of the virus.

"Tocilizumab has been shown to decrease duration of hospitalisation, risk of being placed on mechanical ventilation and risk of death for those with severe COVID-19.



"The TGA's decision has been made on the basis of short-term efficacy and safety data."

Continued approval of this indication depends on the evidence of longer-term efficacy and safety from ongoing clinical trials and post-market assessment.



## Dispensary Corner

**BRITISH** anti-vaxxer, Hayden Brown, will spend three months behind bars after being convicted of supergluing a pharmacy's doors shut.

The 53-year-old pleaded guilty to criminal damage at Norwich Magistrates Court yesterday, the *Daily Mail* reported.

Brown's decision to pour the glue into the door's keyhole led to the cancellation of more than 500 COVID-19 booster vaccination appointments for vulnerable patients.

The court heard that Brown was arrested after being identified using footage recorded on the pharmacy's CCTV camera.

Police also charged Brown with possessing a Class B drug, after discovering a quantity of cannabis at his home.

Norfolk Police Superintendent, Nathan Clark, told the court that Brown's actions caused "great anxiety" for patients who were unable to get their scheduled booster shot.



## Win with Dermal Therapy

Dermal Therapy and *Pharmacy Daily* are this week giving away a \$50 Woolworths gift card each day.



Australian made & owned Dermal Therapy Sanitising Hand Cream, is an innovative 2-in-1 cream that effectively sanitises whilst simultaneously moisturising your hands. It's anti-microbial kills 99.99% of germs whilst intensively nourishing and protecting hands.

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Q: Does Dermal Therapy Sanitising Hand Cream cause drying effects and skin irritation common to gel sanitisers?

For your chance to win, send the correct answer to [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

## NSW pharmacy Omicron site

**CHEMIST** Warehouse The Grove, Liverpool, NSW, has been identified as a potential exposure site for the COVID-19 Omicron variant, NSW Health, revealed this morning.

A patient who has tested positive for the new strain of the virus visited the pharmacy on Orange Grove Road on Mon 29 Nov from 8.10 to 8.15pm.

Anyone who was there at that time is a casual contact and must immediately get tested and isolate until they get a negative result.

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