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Guild election deadline

PHARMACY Guild of Australia members have until 5pm (AEDT) tomorrow, to cast their ballots for representatives standing in their State or Territory branch.

A number of branches have already confirmed their Presidents, with Trent Twomey (Queensland), Anthony Tassone (Victoria), Simon Blacker (ACT) and Nick Panayiaris (South Australia) returned unopposed, while Helen O'Byrne became the new Tasmanian Branch President, succeeding John Dowling.

The NSW Branch President's position is being contested by incumbent, David Heffernan; current Branch Vice President, Paul Jones; and Tim Hewitt.

In the Northern Territory, Peter Hatwell and Travis Lindsay, are going head-to-head to succeed Terry Battalis, as Branch President.

NSW is the only branch where members will be asked to cast their votes for each available Committee position, with six candidates - Mario Barone, John Black, Catherine Bronger, Judith Plunkett, Rick Samimi and Adele Tahan - running for three Vice President positions, with Black the only one of that group not putting his name

forward for one of two National Councillor roles.

Plunkett and Tahan have also nominated to run for the state's three Alternate National Councillor slots, with Robert King and Luke van der Rijt also standing for those positions.

Current Victorian Vice Presidents, Grace Chong and Kin Chong, are running alongside Paul Krassar, Angelo Pricolo and Marilyn Tsitonakis, for the state's three Vice President positions.

Grace Chong will also go head-to-head against Krassar to represent the State on the National Council.

The three South Australian Branch Vice President positions are being contested by Marc Apolloni, Irfan Hashmi, Gregory Scarlett and Paul Simmons.

Apolloni, Hashmi and Scarlett will also run-off to represent SA on the National Council, with Hashmi, Simmons, Matthew Gillespie and Rabia Kajani competing for two Alternate National Councillor roles.

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news.

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Trauma Informed Care: Training for NSW Pharmacists and Pharmacy Staff

Traumatic experiences are common and an individual's response is uniquely personal. Many people live with the ongoing effects of past and present trauma but may be unaware as these signs are often under-recognised.

Trauma Informed Care is a blended course suitable for all pharmacy staff, providing the framework for understanding, responding and aiding recovery to people who have experienced trauma.

This course is one training opportunity available as part of the Mental Health Community Pharmacy Program and is funded by the NSW Government.

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TGA provisionally approves AZ vax

ASTRAZENECA'S COVID-19 vaccine has been granted provisional approval by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

The vaccine has been approved for the active immunisation of individuals 18 years and older.

The TGA noted that "elderly patients over 65 years of age demonstrated a strong immune response to the vaccine in clinical trials, however, there were an insufficient number of participants infected by COVID-19 to conclusively determine the efficacy in this subgroup".

Initial supply of the vaccine will be imported from overseas, before locally manufactured doses become available.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more.

Rural pharmacy viability threatened

REDUCTIONS in funding through the Rural Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance (RPMA) reported by a number of pharmacy owners operating in remote areas this year, could result in services being cut, one pharmacist warns.

Rural NSW pharmacy owner, Robert Smith, said he had received the first RPMA payment under the new Modified Monash Model for rural classification (MMM), and it represented a cut in funding of \$7,500 a year, for his Merriwa store.

Smith said the reduction in RPMA payments was likely to hit pharmacies in areas that were classified as PhARIA 5 and 6 communities under the previous model.

"Unlike regional cities and larger towns that are new beneficiaries of RPMA payments, economies of scale for expansion of pharmacy services (vaccinations etc) often don't stack up due to limitations in population size and the cost of sourcing

and accommodating a second pharmacist on duty," he said.

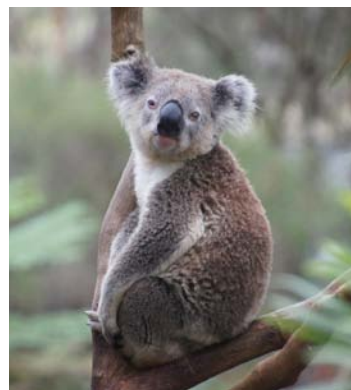
"Effectively this means that the reduction in payment comes directly off the bottom line of the pharmacy's profitability.

"With reduced ability to employ locums it is logical that pharmacies will look at ways to reduce unprofitable/marginal periods of operation so they can get adequate time off away from the pharmacy.

"Unfortunately, this will likely mean decreased access to the pharmacy for patients living in these communities - unlike regional cities and larger towns there is only one choice of pharmacy."

Smith noted that many rural communities were already seeing reduced access to doctors warning, "any more that would reduce access to pharmacy would be devastating for these communities."

"Most PhARIA 5 and 6 communities in NSW have a Multi-Purpose Service with



remote telehealth but these have only limited ability to assist with medication related issues," he said.

"A round trip to the next available pharmacy in our case is 130km in one direction and 200km in the other.

"The two closest pharmacies to our west (92km and 100km away) have also both had their RPMA payments reduced.

"We are at great risk of an inland void in pharmacy access."

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Pharmacist foils nurse's script fraud

A NSW-BASED nurse has been disqualified from practising for 18 months after complaints relating to the misappropriation of two prescription pads and prescription fraud were proven.

The Health Care Complaints Commission took action against the nurse after a pharmacist identified issues with three prescriptions she presented.

A Civil and Administrative Tribunal heard the pharmacist contacted the doctor who had purportedly issued the scripts for verification, however, the GP confirmed that he had not provided the nurse with the prescriptions.

The Tribunal was told the nurse used the two script pads to forge eight prescriptions - six for herself and two for a relative - for diazepam, endone, duloxetine, nitrazepam and oxycodone,

between 24 Feb 2019 and 15 Apr 2019.

The nurse said she was 22 at the time of the offending, and had been in the midst of planning her wedding when she discovered she was infertile.

The Tribunal heard that the nurse underwent fertility treatment, and admitted that she did not handle the situation well.

She said that she had made a number of bad decisions by taking the pads and using them for her own purposes.

The nurse acknowledged her conduct was illegal and unethical, and believed she did not deserve the right to work as a nurse.

"She was ashamed and remorseful for her conduct," Tribunal papers reported.

"She was grateful that her conduct was discovered before



it escalated... she believed that if she had continued she would have been ruined."

The Tribunal heard that the nurse has not worked in a nursing role since Jun 2019, when she gained a full time position as a childcare worker, which she left in Apr 2020 due to pregnancy.



Dispensary Corner

AFICIONADOS claim the health benefits of swimming in cold water are undeniable, but the practice is proving somewhat difficult for those locked down in the current UK winter.

However some are unperturbed, with *My London* reporting on some undertaking creative alternatives, including immersing themselves in garbage bins full of ice and melting snow.

The report cites claims that cold water immersion produces an endorphin high as well as improving immunity, reducing stress and increasing metabolic rates - and one person who swears by it is 45-year-old Lucy Ashdown-Parkes (pictured), who swam the English Channel last year and is now in training to swim the even colder North Channel between Ireland and Scotland.

Currently restrictions prohibit travel to her normal aquatic training grounds so as well as running and rowing in the gym she's taking "ten daily mini dips in my wheelie bin," Ashdown-Parkes enthused.



TGA respirator testing

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has developed new capabilities for the testing of surgical masks and respirators, allowing them to be assessed for compliance with key performance criteria.

The TGA Laboratories is now conducting tests of these items for fluid resistance, particle filtration and sterility, as well as visual inspections of product labelling, design and quality.

The agency will make results available on a regular basis.

Commonwealth urged to fund Vit D

FEDERAL politicians are being urged to support the introduction of a subsidised Vitamin D program as a defence against a third wave of COVID-19.

In a petition signed by 65 people, NutriGenomics Australasia Founder, Professor Ian Brighthope, said there was a need to address common nutrient deficiencies, through a Government-funded supplementation program.

"The science on Vitamin D in the prevention of acute severe respiratory infections is settled,"

he said.

"Vitamin D is affordable and available in pharmacies.

"Over the course of a year, a daily dose of Vitamin D would cost \$40 per person."

Alongside subsidised Vitamin D supplements, the petition's signatories have called for Medicare-funded pathology testing for Vitamin D and other critical nutrients, improved access to "evidence-based, safe nutritional medicines through the pharmacy sector" and nutritional education programs.



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Supplement ads unlawful

THE Federal Court of Australia has found that Evolution Supplements Australia and its director, Cumhur Keskin, "unlawfully advertised prescription-only substances and therapeutic goods not in the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods to consumers".

The company promoted Selective Androgen Receptor Modulators (SARMs) which are "experimental medicines...and no SARM has been approved for human use," the TGA said.

The court's judgement last week prevents the company and Keskin from engaging in consumer advertising of Prescription-Only substances for five years, and ordered the company to pay costs.

A further hearing will be held to determine the penalties that should be paid in relation to this matter.

FDA COVID tick

THE US Food and Drug Administration has issued an Emergency Use Authorisation for monoclonal antibodies for the treatment of COVID-19.

The approval applies to bamlanivimab and etesevimab administered together for the treatment of mild to moderate COVID-19 in adults and paediatric patients who test positive for SARS-CoV-2 and who are at high risk for progressing to severe COVID-19.

A clinical trial found the monoclonal antibodies significantly reduced COVID-19 related hospitalisation & death.

UK script-free pill plan

AUTHORITIES in Great Britain have launched a public consultation on making oral contraceptives available over the counter in pharmacies without prescription.

The consultation affects two progestogen-only contraceptive pills containing desogestrel: Lovima 75 microgram and Hana 75 microgram film-coated tablets, both indicated for continuous use to prevent pregnancy in those of childbearing age.

The pills are currently licensed as prescription-only medicines.

"We are asking the public and stakeholders for their views on whether these two products should become a pharmacy medicine and available over the counter, without a medical prescription," the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) said.

"Pharmacists are trained healthcare professionals...if these two products are reclassified, pharmacists will have access to training materials and a checklist to enable them to identify women who can be supplied this medicine safely," the agency said.

The consultation follows advice from the UK Commission on Human Medicines which says it is safe

for the oral contraceptives to be made available as Pharmacy (P) medicines.

Contraceptive pills containing destrogel will also continue to be available on prescription from GPs and sexual health clinics in the UK.

MHRA Director of Vigilance and Risk Management of Medicines, Sarah Branch, said "we hope to hear from as many people and women's groups as possible," with every response received helping gain a better picture of whether the public believes the contraceptive pill with desogestrel should be available over the counter.

The consultations are open until 05 Mar, with the product sponsors proposing to provide optional pharmacy training materials giving details to pharmacists on the safe use of the items.

An accompanying Pharmacy Consultation Checklist will be available for pharmacists to help check the suitability of the contraceptives for a particular patient based on her age, current or past medical conditions, other medicines being taken, criteria for excluding pregnancy and use following emergency hormonal contraception.



Guild Update

2021 Pharmacy Rental Report

THE 2021 Pharmacy Rental Report is now available.

Pharmacy faces new challenges in the current business environment to remain competitive and viable, and the Guild knows anything it can do to help give its members an edge is important.

As such, the rental report reflects the Guild's commitment to doing all it can to assist our members to flourish in such a volatile and challenging climate.

The report is an invaluable reference and briefing document for Guild members which can be utilised to support future rental negotiations and the 2021 report has been updated to help members in negotiating new leasing arrangements.

With the model of pharmacy undergoing change, managing the cost of doing business for pharmacy owners remains important and occupancy costs are a key component of this. Sound commercial leasing arrangements are essential for pharmacy owners. Not only are occupancy costs, including rent, a significant cost but relocating to alternative premises can be costly and disruptive.

Members can access the report via the Guild members only login [here](#).

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