

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news.

Naloxone pilot extended to Jun

THE Government's Take Home Naloxone (THN) Pilot scheme will run for an additional four months, according to an update from the Pharmacy Programs Administrator last week.

The program launched just over 12 months ago (PD 26 Nov 2019) and will now extend through to 30 Jun 2021.

Under the initiative naloxone will continue to be available for free and without a prescription to people who may experience or witness an opioid overdose in NSW, SA and WA.

"The extension will also allow for the continued collection of important evaluation data," the update noted.

APP secures business events grant

EXHIBITORS and delegates attending the 2021 Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference (APP) who spend a minimum of \$20,000, will be eligible for a 50% rebate through Austrade's \$50 million Business Events Grants program.

Announcing the successful application for access to the funding, APP Convenor and former Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Kos Sclavos, urged attendees to review their costs and complete the online submission form to receive refunds.

"This is a great initiative by the Federal Government to encourage more delegates and exhibitors to attend conferences in 2021," he said.

"As the funding comes from a national pool and it's a first in, best dressed scenario, we encourage anyone interested in accessing this grant to do so now so they don't miss out."



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Sclavos noted that APP, which will run from 20 to 23 May at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre, will be operated as a COVID safe event, which will be submitted to the Queensland Government Public Health Unit for approval.

To date APP and the Guild's 2021 Tasmanian Pharmacy Conference, which is scheduled to take place on 20 and 21 Feb in Hobart, have been the only pharmacy events to be listed on the initial schedule of 102 approved business events.

Austrade said it would contact

organisers of events who have made expressions of interest on behalf of more than 700 conferences and exhibitions by the end of Jan, noting those that do not meet program eligibility will be encouraged to request feedback to adjust their applications and resubmit before the official closing date of 26 Feb.

However, Austrade warned the deadline for expressions of interest "may close earlier to manage demand on the program or if all program funds are committed".

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DARWIN
INFORMATION
SESSIONS



MONDAY
AND TUESDAY
NEXT WEEK

LEADING THROUGH INNOVATION | EMPOWERED TO CHANGE

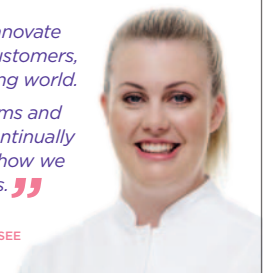
The world changed last year. Our ability to innovate meant we were ready to change with it. We've always been focused on innovation and delivering best-in-class systems that empower our franchisees.

But don't just take our word for it. The Pharmacy Guild of Australia named **Wizard Pharmacy Kalgoorlie Central** as the **WINNER** of the **2020 POTY Excellence in Professional Innovation** category.

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Guild backs Kelly's AZ COVAX stance

AUSTRALIANS are being urged to hold off on drawing conclusions about the efficacy of the AstraZeneca/Oxford University COVID-19 vaccine, based on incomplete data, by the Commonwealth's Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Paul Kelly.

In an interview with *Nine's Today* program this morning, Kelly expressed dismay at reports published in *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, that the Australasian Virology Society was calling for an immediate pause in plans to rollout the vaccine, which is set to form the bulk of Australia's COVID-19 immunisation program.

"I'm concerned once controversy is opened up and people make comments based on interim results from a Phase III trial," he said.

"Once that sort of conversation starts, of course people will be wondering about if it's the right decision, [but] we'll be guided by the actual medical advice.

"We will be guided on the

Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) advice, they'll have all the information they need to make decisions about what vaccines are safe, what vaccines are effective and what vaccines are of high quality.

"[The AZ vaccine] is, on the evidence we have so far, a safe and effective vaccine, and we'll know more about that once the TGA has done all its work."

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, backed the CMO's stance and urged the community to have confidence in the TGA's approval process.

"With the current locally acquired cases and overall active cases we have, Australia has the benefit of being able to take the time necessary through our independent medicines regulator the TGA, to evaluate all of the data from clinical trials and the early roll-out of international vaccination programs before a final approval is given to

administer to our citizens," he said. "The Federal Government has also tried to diversify our vaccine portfolio with what they've purchased in order to not have 'all of our eggs in one basket'.

"The comments made by Chief Medical Officer Paul Kelly expressing caution by drawing conclusions on incomplete data are sensible.

"We should have confidence in the regulatory approval process to take its course in an environment of already time-compressed drug discovery, development and emergency administration and roll out overseas."



Make a quit plan

SMOKERS looking to kick the habit in 2021 are being urged to embrace online tools including Quit's Make a Plan.

The smoking cessation support service's Director, Dr Sarah White, reported more than 33,000 people used the plan to quit in 2020.

White noted that while many people look to the New Year to make a fresh start and attempt to give up smoking, waiting to get back into a post-holiday routine can often be a better approach to successfully quitting.

"With holiday triggers and temptations out of the way, a fresh headspace and (hopefully) more energy, mid-Jan is a great time to stop smoking," she said.

White added that research showed combining support services with nicotine replacement therapies was the most effective way to quit.

APP 2021 / GOLD COAST CONVENTION & EXHIBITION CENTRE
20-23 MAY

Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference & Trade Exhibition

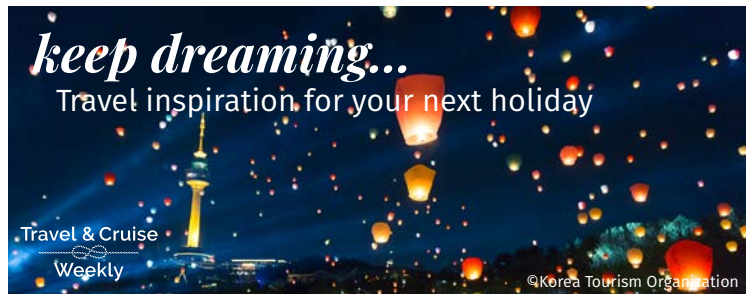
Want face-to-face access to buyers at Australia's largest pharmacy trade exhibition?



Limited stands are available at the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference & Trade Exhibition (APP2021).

Exhibitors are eligible to apply for Business Events Grants Program funding to cover 50% of costs. For further details or to book, call 07 3144 3629 or email events@qldguild.org.au





Dispensary Corner

A STRANGE attempt by a Canadian couple to flout coronavirus restrictions has been nipped in the bud by officials enforcing a new curfew in Quebec, according to a report in the *La Tribune* newspaper.

New rules require citizens to stay indoors between 8pm and 5am - unless they are walking their dogs.

Police spotted the pair outside in the suburb of Sherbrooke after the curfew had come into effect, but noted that oddly the woman was holding a leash attached to the man's neck.

She insisted that since her husband was a "dog" they were complying with the rules.

However officers did not agree and issued each of them a CAD\$1,000 fine.

AND on a similar topic (sort of), comes a report from Korea where a startup has launched an artificial intelligence-powered dog collar which claims to help canines communicate with their owners.

The special Petpuls collar works in conjunction with a smartphone application to analyse barks, with the inventors saying it is able to tell pet-lovers if their fur babies are happy, relaxed, anxious, angry or sad.

The gadget, currently being sold online for US\$99, is based on analysis of thousands of barks from 50 different breeds, with testing by the Seoul National University finding it had a 90% average accuracy rate for emotional recognition.

Phages revert antibiotic resistance

RESEARCHERS from Monash University may have discovered a method to revert antibiotic resistance in dangerous superbugs, using bacteriophages.

Data published in *Nature Microbiology*, showed phages could be used to kill *Acinetobacter baumannii*, which the authors said was responsible for up to 20% of infections in intensive care units.

Lead author from the Monash University School of Biological Science, Dr Fernando Gordillo Altamirano, noted phages are viruses which "only kill bacteria... but cannot harm humans".

The authors found that *A. baumannii* developed resistance to the phages, but in doing so lost their resistance to antibiotics.

"*A. baumannii* produces a capsule, a viscous and sticky outer layer that protects it and stops the entry of antibiotics," Gordillo Altamirano said.



"Our phages use that same capsule as their port of entry to infect the bacterial cell.

"In an effort to escape from the phages, *A. baumannii* stops producing its capsule; and that's when we can hit it with the antibiotics it used to resist."

The study showed resensitisation

to at least seven different antibiotics, Monash University School of Biological Science Group Leader, Dr Jeremy Barr said.

"This greatly expands the resources to treat *A. baumannii* infections," Dr Barr said.

"We're making this superbug a lot less scary."

FIP launches data commission

THE International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) has appointed 20 pharmacists from across the globe to the new One FIP Data and Intelligence Commission, which aims to support the organisation in developing the FIP Global Pharmaceutical Observatory (GPO) as "the most comprehensive and respected source of pharmacy data".

Members include Monash University's John Jackson, along with other eminent pharmacists from Europe, the USA, Africa, Asia and the Americas.

The new Commission will hold its inaugural meeting this month, with the aim of ensuring

that the GPO has "regional applicability and sectoral relevance".

"The GPO is fundamental to delivering the wider FIP vision of a world where everyone benefits from access to safe, effective, quality and affordable medicines and health technologies, as well as from pharmaceutical care services provided by pharmacists," according to an FIP statement issued last week.

The GPO initiative is aligned with FIP's workforce development goals, including the identification of trends to enable decision making on deployment and supply of pharmaceutical workforces.

Feeding forum

UK HEALTH Minister, Nadine Dorries, has launched a "Safer Medicines in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Consortium", with 16 organisations gathering under a "common pledge to meet the information needs of pregnant and breastfeeding women and healthcare professionals through accessible, clear and consistent advice".

The group spans the NHS and regulators plus key charitable and health organisations.

Dorries said more info was vital for the over 50% of expectant mums who will need to take some sort of medicine while pregnant.