

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus a full page from the University of Technology Sydney.

Advance your career at UTS

UNIVERSITY of Technology Sydney (UTS) is offering registered pharmacists the opportunity to boost their career with its Graduate Certificate in Advanced Pharmacy Practice.

The course is delivered in a flexible mode of study to suit working pharmacists and is designed to ensure graduates are equipped with the skills and knowledge to work in general practice, aged care and team care settings.

See **page four** for more information.

Serious problems with RPMA matrix

CHANGES to the funding model for the Rural Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance (RPMA) could see remote pharmacies cut services or shut their doors, the Rural Pharmacy Network of Australia (RPNA) warns.

Under the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA) \$21 million a year will be provided to pharmacies in regional and rural parts of the country through the RPMA, a \$5 million increase on the 6CPA, however, the increased funding is set to be shared across an additional 400 pharmacies (PD 04 Jan) under the Modified Monash Model for rural classification (MMM).

Earlier this week incoming Pharmacy Guild of Australia NSW Branch Committee member, Tim Hewitt, told *Pharmacy Daily* that the new funding matrix appeared to be taking money from "truly remote pharmacies" to support stores in "towns served by a number of pharmacies" (PD 11 Jan).

Speaking with *Pharmacy Daily*, Bourke-based pharmacist and RPNA spokesman, Peter Crothers, said the new funding model had delivered "a really perverse outcome for a rural healthcare accessibility program like the RPMA whose purpose has always been to underwrite the commercial viability of pharmacies in communities that would not otherwise have access to one".

"So the RPMA now meets that policy objective much less effectively than before," he said.

"While pharmacy services to many rural and remote communities will now be more secure, they tend to be the communities where they were already most secure but in at least 200 other communities, more than half of which are among the most remote and vulnerable, pharmacy services will now actually be less secure.

"And that's another kick in the guts for bush communities where primary health care is already



under threat.

"We have RNPA members in MMM5 and MMM6 [locations] who tell us they're now reviewing low-return services such as deliveries and nursing home QUM services and considering cutting back trading hours.

"There might be some for whom this is the last straw leading to closure."

The RNPA said the changes weakened the rationale for the RPMA leaving "it vulnerable to being axed."

"Losing the RPMA would be catastrophic for rural community pharmacy," Crothers said.

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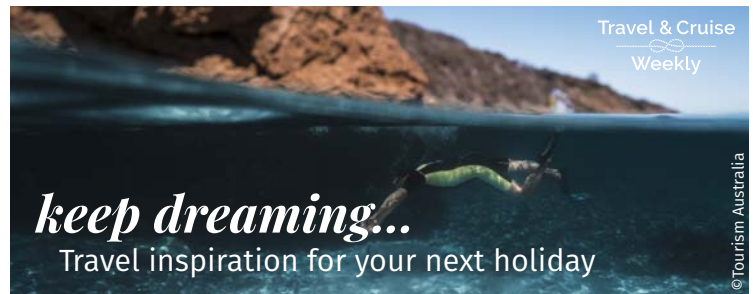
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PSA seeks NSW vax access boost

PHARMACIST immunisers in NSW should be given access to a greater range of vaccines and Government funding to boost vaccination uptake, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) believes.

In the PSA NSW Branch's 2021/22 NSW Pre-Budget Submission, the organisation has called for pharmacists to be authorised to provide vaccines through the National Immunisation Program (NIP) and other state-funded immunisations, for patients aged 10 years and older.

PSA NSW Branch President, Chelsea Felkai, also called on the State Government to implement regulatory changes required to administer COVID-19 and travel vaccines.

"Australian pharmacists have been administering vaccines safely and effectively since 2014 and across all States and Territories since 2016," she said.

"Community pharmacists provide an accessible and safe location for the delivery of vaccination services and by improving vaccination rates, pharmacies can help ease pressure on general practice and hospital emergency departments.

"PSA recommends using pharmacist immunisers for large scale rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine in NSW and ensuring the COVID-19 vaccine and service is funded when administered by any trained immuniser, including pharmacists.

"If the goal is to vaccinate as many people as possible, safely and as soon as possible, then pharmacist immunisers must be involved in the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine".

Highlighting the success of British and Canadian pharmacy-based minor ailments programs, the PSA's submission urged the State Government to allocate \$7.5 million a year to encourage patients with



non-urgent conditions to go to their community pharmacy rather than local hospital for treatment.

"There is strong evidence that the clinical advice provided by community pharmacists regarding symptoms of minor illness results in the same health outcomes as if the patient went to see their GP or attended the emergency department," Felkai said.

The PSA also called for State funding to embed pharmacists in aged care facilities to boost medicines safety.

Pharmacies fight domestic abuse

BRITISH pharmacies are set to implement a new codeword scheme to support victims of domestic abuse.

More than 2,500 Boots and independent pharmacies have signed up to the government-backed 'Ask for ANI' trial.

As part of the program any patients who come into participating pharmacies and use the codeword 'ANI' will be invited into a private counselling area where they can talk to a trained staff member and discuss contacting the police or accessing domestic abuse support services, *The Pharmaceutical Journal* reported.

Royal Pharmaceutical Society President, Sandra Gidley, said it was "vital that we do all we can to help those experiencing domestic abuse when home is no longer safe for them".

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'Go forth, vaccinate' pharmacists told

PHARMACISTS are being urged to have confidence in their capabilities to play a critical part in the rollout of COVID-19 vaccination campaigns.

Speaking during an International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) webinar this week, Queensland University of Technology School of Clinical Sciences Head, Professor Lisa Nissen, said, "we've got these skillsets around cold chain, immunity vaccines, vax schedules, anaphylaxis and more, and we've added through our training, patient assessment, hand hygiene, declining patients and the different routes of administration".

"So I think that's the really important bit we need to highlight to people when have concerns and questions about pharmacists and pharmacy being able to participate in vaccination," she said.

"Many of the concerns [about pharmacist vaccination services] are driven by other people and that pharmacy really gets a lot of its anxiety from things that other people direct towards us.

"[But] we have the capacity to work through many of those things through good training... [so] go forth, vaccinate."



With the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines in Australia set to begin next month (**PD** 14 Jan), Nissen said pharmacists needed to be prepared to engage with patients who may be hesitant about being vaccinated.

"Vaccine hesitancy is one of the top threats to global health," she said.

"So patient engagement is critical, and we know its multi-factorial, it doesn't mean people are anti-vaxxers, and it causes a lot of anxiety for pharmacists and patients.

"It's very important that we feel that we can discuss vaccine

hesitancy with patients.

"It's really important that pharmacists feel confident about that and that there's heaps of tools and resources available for people to do that and to upskill in the area of vaccine hesitancy and the types of interactions they can have with patients."

MEANWHILE, in a bid to combat COVID-19 vaccine concerns, NSW Health Minister, Brad Hazzard, told *ABC Breakfast* this morning, "any vaccine that is approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration will be to the benefit of this country".

Dispensary Corner

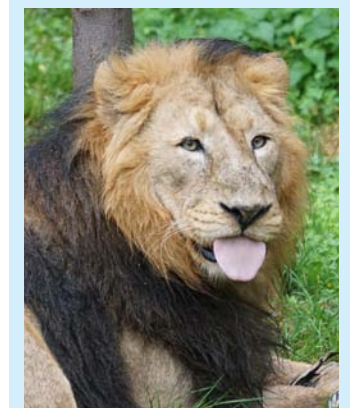
WHILE many of us have an idea of the songs we would like at our funeral, British comedian Ricky Gervais has taken end-of-life requests to an extreme level after revealing that he wants his body to be fed to the lions at London Zoo.

The Office star told US TV host, Conan O'Brien, "I'd prefer to give something back, rather than be cremated or buried".

Gervais, aged 59, described being fed to the lions as "useful," adding "we never give anything back. We take everything from this world. We just eat animals; anything that moves we eat...we're not even food for other things".

He also said he enjoyed imagining the moment his "dead, fat, naked, 73-year-old maybe if I'm lucky," corpse was thrown in the den.

London Zoo Chief, Kathryn England, said while the attraction would of course welcome any donations to help keep the lions fed, she suspected Gervais would be "a bit too gristly" for the felines.



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HMR survey

CONSULTANT pharmacists and academics from the University of Western Australia, Monash University and the University of Sydney are conducting a survey to find out how pharmacists perform Home Medicines Reviews (HMR).

The team hopes to uncover ways to improve the quality and consistency of HMR services across Australia.

CLICK HERE for the survey.

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