



No excuses for slow COVAX rollout

AUSTRALIA is falling “hopelessly behind” in its rollout of COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX) and needs to utilise all available immunisers including pharmacists, Federal Shadow Health Minister, Mark Butler, believes.

Speaking at the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference, Butler (**pictured**), welcomed news that 56 pharmacies in rural Queensland are set to join the rollout campaign (**PD** yesterday), but questioned when more stores would be approved.

“We need all hands on deck,” he said, adding “and I want to see your services as community pharmacists engaged in just as central a way as they were last year as we were trying to get that first wave of the pandemic under control.

“Now we know out of the



National Cabinet decision announced in Apr that broadly your services have been deferred from the original intention, which was to have you working [in administering COVAX] as early as May.

“I’m glad to hear there was an announcement at least in Queensland for several dozen community pharmacies to be engaged very soon... but quite when the rest of your services are going

to be engaged in this incredibly important national logistical exercise still remains unclear to me.

“And meanwhile we are hopelessly behind schedule... we need to ramp this up quickly.”

Butler also criticised the Prime Minister’s view that the rollout of COVAX was not a race.

“It is a race,” Butler said.

“We’re seeing other countries that did just as well as Australia last year, like Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea, now battling outbreaks particularly of the variants that are much more infectious and some of which are resistant to some of the vaccines.

“We need more urgency in this program and we need more trusted hands on deck.”

He added that 1.3 million doses of COVAX are available each week in Australia, but less than a third are going into people’s arms.

Wizard services

WIZARD Pharmacy is today highlighting its tailored professional services programs for franchisees, resulting in better patient outcomes and an increase in dispensary revenue - see **page five**.

Direct is growing

DIRECT Chemist Outlet now has more than 75 stores in its network, having successfully converted a range of other brands to help owners compete with “the big guys” - more details on **page six**.

Today’s issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news, plus full pages from:

- **Wizard Pharmacy**
- **Direct Chemist Outlet**



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Simple connects

SIMPLE Retail has successfully established the first live Provider Digital Access (PRODA) connection with Services Australia for PBS Online claiming.

The first live site is a pharmacy in Melbourne, with the link following some weeks of testing and collaboration with the Government agency.

Simple Retail CEO Paul Frostick said it was vital that pharmacy gets comfortable with the new digital platform, prior to the Mar 2022 retirement of the existing Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) authentication system.

"If the phase out of PKI for access to PBS Online on 13 Mar 2022 is not to become a 'ticking clock' the sector needs to have undertaken the necessary change and adoption well in advance," he said, noting that Simple Retail now plans to connect the rest of its pharmacy clientele over the next few months.

ECPs need to grasp political roles

AUSTRALIA'S eighth pharmacist-turned MP, Federal Shadow Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Carers, Emma McBride, (pictured) wants more pharmacists - particularly those early in their careers - to take on leadership roles in public life.

As the lone pharmacist in the House of Representatives, McBride told delegates at the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference (APP) on the Gold Coast yesterday, that pharmacists have a lot to offer on the political stages.

"I believe pharmacists have so much to contribute throughout our communities and within healthcare, but [also] more broadly," she said.

"I would really like to see more pharmacists step into leadership roles within our parliaments.

"There's only been eight pharmacists in the House of Representatives...[and] each and every one of you have a contribution to make and do make within your communities, within your regions and within your cities.

"And I'd like to see that voice



strengthened and elevated - so to every pharmacist here today, please consider taking up these opportunities."

McBride added that with many of the 36,000 registered pharmacists in Australia classified as early career pharmacists they have a significant stake in the future of healthcare, and the decisions made at Federal and State and Territory government levels.

"I think in order for them to be effective they need to have that

voice [in Parliament] and I would like to think that it's welcomed and encouraged," she said.

McBride hailed the efforts of community pharmacists throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, noting they remained available to patients who were overwhelmed and confused by the crisis.

She added that the profession has played a vital role in managing medication shortages caused by local outages and global supply chain disruptions.

Wizard plans to take magic to SA, NT

WESTERN Australian brand, Wizard Pharmacy, is hoping to continue its expansion outside its home state with the appointment of Rachael Runner as Franchise Development Manager for South Australia and the Northern Territory.

Wizard Pharmacy CEO, Sally Parker, said Runner would bring more than 25 years' industry experience, including work with GuildLink, TerryWhite Chemmart and Symbion Pharmacy Services.

"With the assistance of Rachael, we look forward to introducing potential franchisees in South Australia and the Northern Territory to the Wizard pharmacy platform that has proven to deliver positive results," said Parker.

The former Demodeks-Meditech National Business Development Manager, Runner, said she was excited to join the group.



"I have professionally recommended Wizard in my travels as the most holistic pharmacy group in WA, and now I get to represent the business in the other Australian states for growth and a sustainable future opportunity that other brands do not offer," Runner said.

"Wizard is more than just a brand name on the door - the pharmacy business support given to any franchisee to help deliver customer success outweighs any group offering I have seen in the industry in my 25 years of experience."

Pictured, Parker and Runner.

We're on the hunt... Advertising Operations and Social Media Coordinator

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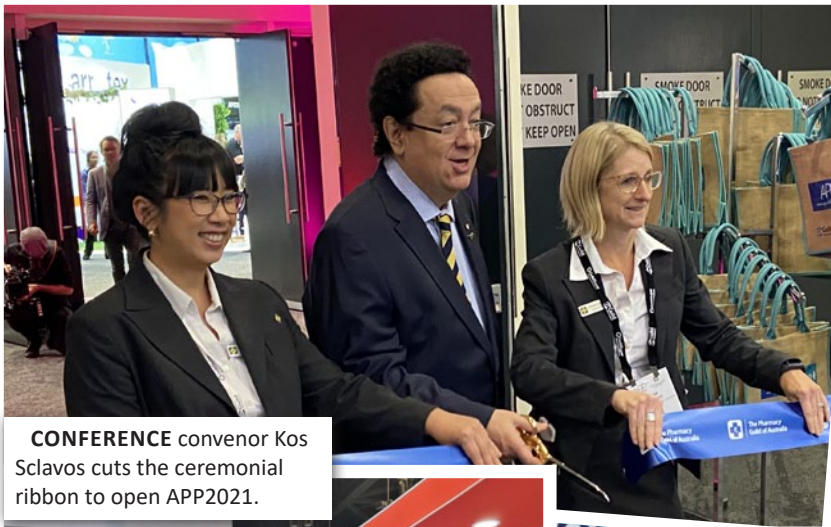
Industry turns out for APP

THIS week's Australian Pharmacy Professional conference at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre marks a milestone for the industry, with thousands of delegates able to gather in person for the first time since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Mar last year.

Pharmacy Daily has joined the throng, and took these photos last night on the sold-out trade exhibition floor where hundreds of industry product and service suppliers are showcasing their wares.

That's alongside the packed conference program covering key issues including Australia's COVID-19 economic and health recovery, the future of community pharmacy, cyber security and more - along with plenty of networking opportunities, social events and inspirational presentations.

The conference continues today and over the weekend, with plenty more coverage in **Pharmacy Daily** next week and more pics at facebook.com/pharmacydaily.



CONFERENCE convenor Kos Sclavos cuts the ceremonial ribbon to open APP2021.



THE team from myPak Solutions: David Turnbull, Jonathan Mayes, Tom Winslow, Rachele Frain and Ben Fifield



METAGENICS out in force: Sam Pope, Michael Spurrell, Paula Hann, Jade Keppell and Jessica Neal.



ABBVIE'S Astrid Macassey, Christiane Constantidis, Fiona Tregaskis and Damien Liuzzo.

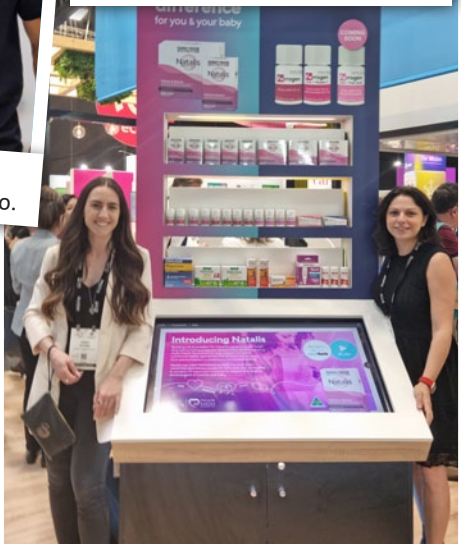
BELOW: Arrotex Pharmaceuticals' Jessica Velevska and Ornella Caiazza.



ANNE Ottosson and Michelle Granzow from TePe.



OLIVIA O'Donnell and Brad Miller from Smith & Nephew.



SOME of the Fred IT contingent: Kerri McLennan, CEO Paul Naismith, and Leah Ford.



VIATRIS on deck: Michael Bramble, Stephen Jenkins, Maria Mollica, Karl Pfeffer, Angela Fistar, Daniel Armstrong, Benhamin Schnieder, Toan Do and David Lai.

Dispensary Corner

WE ALL thought Britain's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is highly dependent on a successful vaccine rollout, but it appears that beer may also be involved.

Finance experts have urged the UK's drinkers to go hard over the summer, suggesting the country's entire population will need to down at least 124 pints each in order to save the nation's hospitality sector.

Food and beverage outlets have suffered record losses due to lockdown closures, with a new "Your Local Pub Needs You" campaign also suggesting 122 glasses of wine each would also do the trick - while non-drinkers can do their part by scoffing 976 packets of chips.

SOUTH Korean men are using lots of erectile dysfunction medications, according to a new study of the waste water in the country's capital Seoul.

A paper published in the *Scientific Reports* journal this month studied the levels of phosphodiesterase-5 inhibitors (PDE-5i) in two sewage treatment plants, finding there was a particular spike on weekends as well as near the Gangnam locality which houses lots of nightclubs and bars.

"We estimated that the amount of PDE-5i consumption was 31% higher than in areas with fewer nightlife spots," the researchers noted.

They also found the plants were not effectively dealing with the PDE-5i, which was discharged into local rivers.

Time to recognise mental health role

COMMUNITY pharmacy's role in supporting patients with mental health conditions needs to be given greater prominence in suicide prevention planning, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, believes.

Speaking during the opening plenary session of the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference (APP) yesterday, Twomey told Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, that pharmacies are "on the frontline when it comes to mental health".

"On 21 Apr the ABC ran a story with the headline, Pharmacists on the frontline of Australia's mental health battle - but they're forgotten," he said.

"They referenced a survey of community pharmacists across Australia and Canada that said 85% of respondents said they had interacted with someone who had thought about suicide, while 66% said a patient had voluntarily



told them they had thought about taking their own life.

"It's a shocking set of statistics and it is really time for us to recognise that pharmacists are on the frontline when it comes to mental health.

"We need to do more and with your help and assistance we can do that.

"Minister, I know you have been a supporter of mental health training

and support services, and I would ask that in the next iteration of the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan, consideration be given to community pharmacy's inclusion given our accessibility and the lever of trust our patients have in the advice that we give.

"[Because] for many we might be the first conversation that someone has [about their mental health], but we certainly don't want to be the last."

Australia has opioid crisis: Twomey

FUNDING is needed to support pharmacists to combat Australia's "silent" opioid crisis, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, says.

Twomey told delegates at the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference on the Gold Coast yesterday, including Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, that while there were positive elements of last week's Federal Budget, including funding for a temporary community pharmacy program for the rollout of COVID-19 vaccinations there were "disappointments" too, highlighting the Government's decision not to support the



Guild's pre-Budget submission to tackle drug-related opioid dependence.

"We do have an opioid crisis in Australia that is largely silent and unaddressed," he said.

"And we will continue to push for proper funding for opioid treatment across Australia."

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Pharmacy Daily

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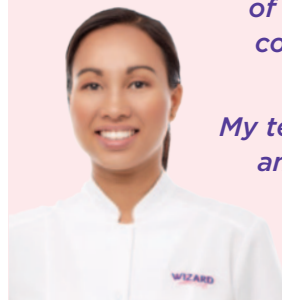
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