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## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news plus a full page from UTS.

## Upskill with UTS

PHARMACISTS looking to expand their skillset can boost their knowledge with the University of Technology Sydney's (UTS's) Graduate Certificate in Advanced Pharmacy Practice.

The program is delivered in a flexible mode to support working pharmacists, while preparing candidates with the skills and knowledge required to take on roles in general practice, aged care and in team-care settings, as the medication expert.

See **page three** for more information.

# RAT will be key to suppressing COVID

**SELF-ADMINISTERED** COVID-19 rapid antigen testing (RAT) kits will become a critical tool for Australians into the future, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, believes.

Twomey, has welcomed advice from the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) that applications will be taken from 01 Oct for companies to supply self-tests for use at home, from 01 Nov onwards (**PD 28 Sep**).

Twomey said that he expected to see self-testing kits become widely available through community pharmacies, once they receive TGA approval.

"We need to utilise all available resources in this once-in-a-century fight against this pandemic," Twomey said.

"As the Federal Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, has made clear,



all necessary checks and balances must be undertaken to ensure safety and effectiveness of these tests, and also the regulatory process will involve State and Territory Governments.

"Community pharmacists have helped accelerate vaccinations against COVID-19, especially now that Moderna vaccine stocks are available.

"Pharmacists will continue to deliver resources to the community in the fight against COVID and the effort to restore our Australian way of life – at least to a 'new normal'."

Meanwhile, Twomey has called on pharmacies that have yet to join the COVID-19 vaccination rollout, to submit an expression of interest form to the Pharmacy Programs Administrator as soon as possible.

## Lowrie's legacy will live on: Tassone

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia is mourning the passing of former Victorian Branch President, Brian Lowrie (pictured).

In a statement issued yesterday, incumbent Guild Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, noted that Lowrie "made a huge mark on the pharmacy profession."

"Brian was loved and will be remembered by everyone that he served," Tassone said.



"Whilst I never personally had the pleasure of working with him directly, his legacy has and will continue for our profession."

## Police hunt for armed pharmacy bandit

**POLICE** are searching for a knife-wielding bandit who held-up a Townsville pharmacy yesterday afternoon, who is believed to have fled the scene on a bicycle.

The armed robber entered the store at the Northtown Mall shortly before 5pm and reportedly made off with an unspecified quantity of medications and money.

At the time of the robbery, the suspect was wearing a long-sleeved shirt, blue shorts, a blue



baseball cap and sunglasses, the *Townsville Bulletin* reported.

The man was also seen carrying two dark-coloured reusable shopping bags.

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### Dispensary Corner

**BRITAIN'S** famous Glastonbury music festival is causing a threat to local aquatic wildlife, according to a new study from Bangor University in Wales published in the *Environmental Research* journal this month.

The annual event, which sees hundreds of thousands of people descend on the countryside, saw the researchers concluding that extensive public urination has led to high levels of cocaine and MDMA in nearby waterways.

MDMA concentrations in the Whitelake River quadrupled the week after the 2019 festival, while cocaine levels in the water could affect the life cycle of endangered European eels.

The measurements confirm that Glastonbury's organisers need to both clamp down on illicit drug use, and also perhaps install some more portaloos.

"This has highlighted the fact that stopping public urination is so important," said lead scientist Christian Dunn, a professor in wetland science.

"Not just for the traditional pollutants, which we've kind of known about, but for these types of pollutants, which we're only now really just becoming aware of - pharmaceutical waste, illicit drug waste - these are important," he said.

A statement from the team behind the Glastonbury Festival said "peeing on the land is something we will continue to strongly discourage.

"We also do not condone the use of illegal drugs at Glastonbury," they added.

## Sales team mandatory COVAX push

**PHARMABROKER** Sales is implementing mandatory COVID-19 vaccination at its sites, in an effort to protect staff, trading partners and the public, from the pandemic virus.

With sales representatives regularly visiting more than 3,000 pharmacies across rural and metropolitan areas, Pharmabroker General Manager, Geoff Lovell, said the decision was "based partly on creating a secure environment for both field and office-based staff".

"Vaccination is effective at reducing the spread of COVID-19 and results in lower viral loads when transmission does occur," he said.

"With higher rates of hospitalisation seemingly imminent and unavoidable as the country opens up in the coming months, we have a responsibility to our

personnel, trading partners, and the public.

"Pharmacies represent a significant risk of infection because they're often the first port of call for people who feel unwell.

"We want to minimise the risks posed by and to our employees visiting those environments and moving around communities.

"Vaccination is the best available device we have for that."

Pharmabroker Area Manager for Victoria and Tasmania, Emma Gamble, said the decision to mandate vaccination made her more comfortable visiting pharmacies and interacting with customers.

"The last thing anyone within the organisation wants is to catch the virus or contribute to its spread, and vaccination makes that all the



more unlikely," she said.

The move has also been backed by Priceline Pharmacy General Manager, Andrew Vidler.

"It makes sense for the industry to encourage uptake," he said.

"It's reasonable to think our customers will expect that too, so I'm happy that Pharmabroker Sales have decided on this strategy."

### Vaccinate if you wanna mate

**VACCINATION** status is going to be a key criteria for prospective lovers as NSW and Victoria prepare to emerge from their COVID-19-induced lockdown, a survey reveals.

The poll conducted by Durex Australia and Kantar, found that 45% of Australians would "prefer not to sleep with a non-vaccinated person", while being double-dosed (42%) was rated as being almost as appealing to lusty partners, as being well-groomed (44%).

With NSW inching closer to freedom, Durex is joining the push to boost uptake rates above 80%, driving a mobile billboard with live data from Homebush to Pleasure Point.

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