

## Today's issue of PD

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

- Willach
- TerryWhite Chemmart

## Clozapine update

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has issued a safety advisory for clozapine about the risk of constipation.

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## Now is time to act on medicines costs

**CONSUMER** Price Index (CPI) data released today highlights the need for action to be taken to ease the cost of prescription medicines, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia believes.

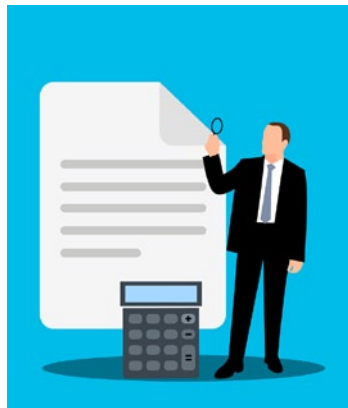
Guild National President, Trent Twomey, said the figures were a reminder that many households are struggling with the rising cost of living and have been forced to make choices between buying medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), paying bills or purchasing groceries.

“Community pharmacies are seeing patients struggling to afford medicines from pay-cheque to pay-cheque and asking which medicines they can afford to skip for that month in order to meet other household costs,” he said.

“There aren’t many levers the Government can pull to reduce the cost of living but it does have the ability to make PBS medicines more affordable for middle income households.

“For many households, these medicines are the cost of staying alive.

“Research by independent pollster Insightfully found that almost a third of voters (30%) say



they or their families have found it difficult to afford medicines over the past three years.

“This is especially affecting middle income households, with over a quarter (26%) of people who aren’t entitled to a concession card struggling to pay for their scripts at the point of sale.

“That’s up four points since Jan this year, when the PBS co-payment went up again, bringing the maximum cost of PBS medicine for non-concession card holders to \$42.50, doubling since the year 2000.

“Some people have been skipping medicines entirely, with 17% saying they have been unable to purchase

their medicines.

“This is an issue right at the intersection of the voter priorities of health and cost of living.

“It is heartbreaking to see patients forced to choose between buying their prescription medicines and buying other essentials like food and fuel.

“The token cash handouts landing in people’s bank accounts today will do nothing to address the growing unaffordability of health-preserving essential medicines.”

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## Pharmacy owner cops 18-month ban

**QUEENSLAND-BASED** pharmacy owner, Qui Van Bui's professional registration has been cancelled for at least 18 months after being found guilty of unsatisfactory professional conduct.

The NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal heard that between Jul 2015 and Sep 2016, Bui had purchased and received Schedule 4 and S4D medications from fellow pharmacist, Jason Nguyen (**PD** 04 Nov 2019), in the car park of Sydney's Star Casino, to distribute to members of the public without valid prescriptions.

In Sep 2017, the Pharmacy Council of NSW imposed a number of conditions on his registration, barring him from possessing, supplying, dispensing, administering or manufacturing benzodiazepines, which were removed in Jul 2019.

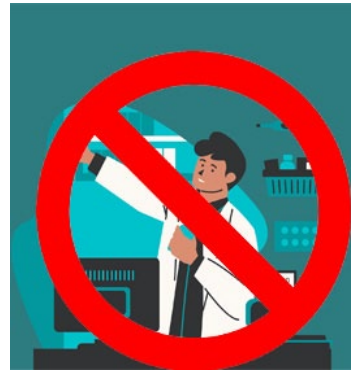
Bui moved to Queensland in 2017,

and subsequently became the proprietor of Westbrook Pharmacy, in the State's southeast.

In a submission to the Tribunal, Bui reported that since moving to Westbrook he has devoted one afternoon a week to professional education to ensure that the admitted and proven conduct relating to dispensing of S4D and S8 medicines is not repeated.

He also told the Tribunal that he has not been to a casino since 2017, and "no longer has any interest in gambling".

In a letter submitted to the Tribunal by employee pharmacist, Rabia Khan, who has worked one day a week at Westbrook Pharmacy over the last three years, she described Bui as "a responsible pharmacist who always puts his customers first", noting the he "displays remorse and always helps staff to meet practice standards".



Despite positive references from Khan and others of Bui's improved practice, the Tribunal ruled that "the available material does not support a finding that Bui is reformed".

The Tribunal cancelled Bui's registration, barring him from seeking a review of cancellation period for at least 18 months, and ordered him to pay costs.

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## Aged care meds safety survey

**PHARMACISTS** are being invited to share their views on medicines-related harm in aged care residents, and facilitators and barriers to reducing these harms, with researchers from the University of Tasmania.

All participants who complete the survey will be entered in a draw to receive one of two \$100 gift cards, while those who agree to take part in an interview will receive a \$50 gift card each.

**CLICK HERE** for the survey.

## Indigenous vax campaign launched

**EFFORTS** to improve uptake of childhood immunisations in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations is being given a shot in the arm with a new Federal campaign.

The Department of Health is aiming to encourage Indigenous parents and carers to get their children vaccinated on time through the National Immunisation Program.

In a statement released yesterday, the Department noted that "vaccination rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander Children have decreased over recent periods, particularly at one and two years of age".

The campaign aims to build on the previous two phases of the Childhood Immunisation Education Campaign, using "search, social and online channels" to reach parents.

It will also use video, posters, brochures and personal stories to highlight the importance of getting children vaccinated on schedule.

**CLICK HERE** for more information.

## DRAW THE LINE... when it comes to temporary pain relief



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## Dispensary Corner



**EFFORTS** to assist a naturopath to produce fake COVID-19 vaccination cards have cost a Californian pharmacist her job.

Former Adventist Health Ukiah Valley Hospital Director of Pharmacy, Ranna Shamiya, was one of three people US Department of Justice prosecutors believe assisted naturopath, Juli Mazi, to sell falsified vaccination records and dodgy "COVID cures" *North Bay Business Journal* reported.

The Department alleged that Shamiya used her position to find legitimate lot numbers for authorised COVID-19 vaccines, which she passed on to Mazi.

The naturopath then used the numbers to produce fake vaccination cards, so her patients could falsely claim to have been immunised.

If convicted Shamiya could face up to five years behind bars, a US\$250,000 fine and three years of supervised release.

Reflecting on the investigation a spokesperson for the hospital said it was "a legal matter, and it's disappointing".

"I would note that at no point did this jeopardise our commitment to the safety of our patients," the spokesperson said.

"This is not a patient-facing charge she's accused of."

Meanwhile, Mazi has pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud and a further charge of providing false statements related to healthcare matters.

## Pharmacy to Indigenise curriculum

**PHARMACY** educators are taking steps to ensure the profession's workforce is equipped with a knowledge and skills to provide culturally safe care to Indigenous Australians going forward.

The Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) and the Council of Pharmacy Schools Australia and New Zealand (CPS) are developing a network - the Indigenous Health Strategy Group (IHSG) - to "Indigenise pharmacy curriculum".

APC Director and Leaders in Indigenous Pharmacy Profession Education (LIPPE) lead, Associate Professor Faye McMillan, welcomed the development.

"Twenty-one years since I graduated as the first Aboriginal person to graduate as a pharmacist in this country, I am proud to see the work that is taking place with LIPPE and the impact that this will have on the future pharmacy workforce," she said.

"I want to acknowledge the passion, commitment and

staunchness of so many people and organisations that have contributed to LIPPE, and I am so excited for the future."

APC CEO, Bronwyn Clark, said the organisation had started its journey to improving cultural safety in the sector in 2020, by updating pharmacy education standards.

The APC has also published a literature review titled, *Approaches to implementation of cultural safety in the training and education of health professionals in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the US*, in 2021.

A subsequent webinar and podcast series, based on the findings of the review, nurtured new and old relationships, hearing from pharmacy programs developing new ways to educate pharmacy students on culturally safe practices.

"Hearing an APC friend share her story with the health system as a First Nations woman, and



listening to journeys of these new programs reinforced the need for this initiative," she said.

"The next step is to make our intention known and to purposely walk towards creating a health system that is free of racism."

The IHSG will be officially launched on 16 May, with the goals of providing a culturally safe pharmacist workforce, and to show leadership in the pharmacy sector in achieving health equity.

## SHPA welcomes first opioid standard

**THE** Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed the release of the *Opioid Analgesic Stewardship in Acute Pain Clinical Care Standard*.

SHPA CEO, Kristin Michaels, said the new standard, released by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, would help pharmacists to improve quality use of medicines.

"The release of these standards will further empower hospital pharmacists to reduce the inappropriate supply and dispensing of opioids, and to provide opioid medicine de-escalation and tapering plans at

the point of discharge, so that primary healthcare providers and patients are supported to significantly reduce the potential for developing long-term misuse," she said.

Michaels added that trials of hospital pharmacist-led opioid stewardship programs in Victorian and Queensland had shown the reduced opioid use.

"Such services need to be funded by all hospitals in partnership between State, Territory and Commonwealth jurisdictions to ensure these clinical standards can be met," she said.

## Costi joins Blooms team

**BLOOMS** The Chemist has appointed Yvette Costi as its new Chief Marketing Officer.

Costi has previously held senior level brand and marketing positions at large global organisations, and will bring significant experience to the role.

She will work closely across all departments of the group to ensure that strategic marketing initiatives are integrated to promote success for Blooms from head office level down to individual stores.

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