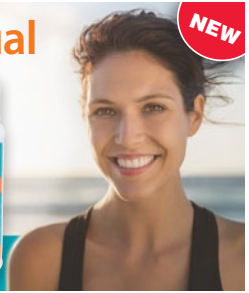


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## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

### ATAGI reviewing infant COVAX

PLANS to roll out Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine (COVAX) to children aged six months to five years, are being considered by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI).

In a statement released yesterday, the group noted that the vaccine had been granted provisional approval by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) earlier this week (PD 19 Jul), but has yet to endorse the use of the vaccine for infants.

"ATAGI will provide advice to the Minister for Health on the use of COVID-19 vaccines in this age group in due course," the group said.

## AMA attacks a recruitment drive

ATTACKS by the Australian Medical Association (AMA) on plans to expand pharmacists' scope of practice in North Queensland are an effort to boost its membership, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia believes.

The Guild's Queensland Branch President, Chris Owen, rejected claims made by the AMA that the trial - which will authorise participating pharmacists to diagnose, treat and prescribe medications for 23 conditions - would put patients' safety at risk (PD breaking news).

Owen said the AMA wanted to "control community pharmacists' scope of practice", while forcing "patients to wait longer for care".

"Community pharmacists are not trying to replace GPs, rather community pharmacists want to have a more active role in fully meeting the needs of their patients and to work more collaboratively within the healthcare system," Owen said.

"The AMA national conference is at the end of Jul, sadly their National President [Dr Omar Khorshid] has been forced into an east coast visit to whip up support for a lobby group with less than 15% membership within its own profession.

"Sadly, the current AMA is a sad relic of its former self which has an opinion on almost every facet of society - leaving its dwindling membership high and dry on the issues that really matter to local general practitioners."

Owen said the AMA had spread false information about the trial, including that pharmacists participating in the NQPSPP would "undertake the equivalent of three weeks of online training" before being allowed to prescribe medications (PD 21 Jul).

"[This is] factually incorrect, the training for the NQPSPP includes 12 to 16 months of additional university postgraduate education as well as a practical training



component," he said.

"This [training] includes face-to-face learning."

Owen noted that the AMA's suggestion that the Queensland Government had failed to consult with the community was incorrect, noting that the organisation, alongside the Queensland Aboriginal and Island Health Council and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, had walked away from the trial's Steering Committee, "for their own political purposes".

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## Dispensary Corner

**RESIDENTS** of the Northern Victorian town of Mildura may have thought Sydney's Vivid Festival was on tour this week, with the sky above them turning pink.

The unexpected light show had some locals wondering if the world was coming to an end, or a potential alien invasion was about to commence.

However, the source of the unusual glow transpired to be medicinal cannabis producer, Cann Group's growing facility, where blackout blinds had been left open, allowing its hydroponic lights to illuminate the night sky.

Cann Group CEO, Peter Crook described the event as "Aurora marijuanis" during an interview with *ABC Mildura-Swan Hill Breakfast*.

"Normally, the blackout blinds close at the same time as the sun sets, but we had the lights on and the blinds hadn't yet closed, so there was a period where it created a glow," he said.

## Pharmacist loses \$90

A SYDNEY-BASED pharmacy owned by a convicted fraudster will no longer be able to dispense medicines through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) after being stripped of its Section 90 approval.

The Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC) issued a statement this morning confirming that it has revoked its approval for the Lindfield Pharmacy (pictured), due to the actions of proprietor, Sabina Grewal.

The move came more than a year after Grewal was convicted of making in excess of 520 fraudulent PBS claims worth \$365,922.09 between Nov 2015 and Aug 2018 (PD 15 Mar 2021).

Confirming the decision in the Federal Register of Legislation, DoHAC Assistant Secretary, Compliance Enforcement and Professional Review Branch, Benefits Integrity and Digital Health Division, Stefanie Janiec, noted that Grewal's behaviour breached section 135.19(1) of the *Criminal Code Act 1995*.

"Grewal's approval in respect of the approved premises was revoked by a delegate of the Minister for Health and Aged Care pursuant to



section 133(2)(b) of the *National Health Act 1953* on the basis that Grewal was convicted by the NSW District Court on 12 Mar 2021 of an offence of engaging in a course of conduct with the intention of dishonestly obtaining a gain from the Commonwealth," Janiec said. "This revocation decision means that, with effect from 8 Apr 2022, Grewal ceased to be an approved pharmacist under the Act and was, from that date, unable to supply pharmaceutical benefits at the approved premises and be paid by the Commonwealth for the supply of a pharmaceutical benefit at the approved premises."

Grewal's professional registration has also been suspended, and she was placed on an 18-month intensive corrections order with 350 hours community services, following her conviction.

## Vape warning

QUEENSLAND-BASED business, 13 Vape Pty Ltd, is being ordered to cease its promotion of and supply of nicotine vaping products, by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

The regulator said it was of the view that "when taken in the context of the whole advertisement, the website URL, trading name and website content collectively promoted the use and supply of nicotine vaping products".

"The company has been directed to cease using the following words in the website URL and in the company trading name, 'vape' or any variation such as 'vaping', in conjunction with 'prescription', 'script', 'medical', 'pharmacy', 'pharmacists' or any variation of those words," the TGA said.

In addition to the direction notice, 13 Vape's executive officer has also been issued two infringement notices totalling \$5,328, for alleged unlawful advertising of nicotine vaping products, in breach of the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989*.



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