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### Today's issue of PD

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

- Fred IT
- iNova Pharmaceuticals

### Pharmacy teams makes splash

WIZARD Pharmacy Services, Wizard Warriors Swim team, has raised \$5,215 for the Starlight Children's Foundation.

The team swam more than 165km throughout Feb, as part of the 2022 Starlight Super Swim Challenge.

Wizard Pharmacy's Creative Designer, and swim captain, Shari Sweeney, said the team was proud of its efforts in surpassing its initial 134km goal for the challenge.

"Swimming for such a worthwhile cause gave us a lot of motivation to hit the pool each day," she said.

## Free RAT extension 'makes sense'

**MOVES** to extend the Federal Government's free COVID-19 rapid antigen test (RAT) program for concession and Veteran Affairs cardholders are being welcomed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

Announcing the continuation of the free RAT scheme on Fri, as part of a \$2.1 billion winter preparedness program, Commonwealth Health Minister, Greg Hunt, said Australia was likely to see COVID-19 co-circulating with influenza viruses in the coming months.

The extended scheme will allow concession and Veteran Affairs cardholders to claim a further 10 RATs between the beginning of May and the end of Jul, with a maximum of five tests per month – in line with the program's current rules.

Guild National President, Trent Twomey, said the decision to continue to provide access to free RATs for concession cardholders until 31 Jul, made "good sense".

"We don't know what is

happening with the latest sub-variant of COVID-19 so extending this access program makes good sense," he said.

"Also, as we head into winter and the flu season, extending the program will help people feeling unwell differentiate between COVID-19 and the flu which is really important."

Twomey urged pharmacies participating in the program to use the [findapharmacy.com.au](https://www.findapharmacy.com.au) platform to let customers know that they are involved in the scheme and that they have tests available.

"Pharmacies can update the website at any time to indicate whether they have stocks of the tests and going to the website can save people a lot of time," he said.

"The availability of RATs is now much more stable and patients should have no problem accessing them.

"I also remind everyone that with the flu season coming, and COVID-19 still a very real threat,



that getting vaccinated against the flu is as important as ever."

The Government estimates that the extension of the free RAT program will cost \$286 million, however, Twomey told a recent Guild update webinar that the scheme has been running under budget to date.

In addition to extending the concessional RAT program, Hunt said the Government has committed to purchasing six months' worth of personal protective equipment for aged care and disability requirements.

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## Hunter pharmacist wins PSA honour

**NEWCASTLE** Hunter Valley Pharmacists Association President, Lucian (Luke) Kelly, has been named as the 2022 Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) NSW Pharmacist of the Year (PotY).

Kelly was one of four PSA members honoured at the organisation's NSW Annual Therapeutic Update in Newcastle on Sat, with University of Sydney Senior Lecturer, Dr Sarira El-den, being named the branch's Early Career Pharmacist (ECP) of the Year, Sydney's Grahame Cox, presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award, and Broken Hill-based intern, Blake McCallum, claiming the Intern of the Year title.

PSA NSW Branch President, Chelsea Felkai, said the PotY award recognised Kelly's contribution to pharmacy education, student mentoring and ground level support of community pharmacists.

"Luke has been recognised for his significant contribution to the pharmacy profession in NSW, and

as he is President of the Newcastle Hunter Valley Pharmacists Association, it is fitting that he has received this honour here in Newcastle," she said.

"He offers critical support services to community pharmacy and has supported the rollout of programs including My Health Record and other mental health initiatives across the region, notably, the depression screening program, Empathise.

"He is also a pharmacist mentor in the national PharMIbridge trial."

Felkai also praised El-den's "outstanding contribution to pharmacy education and research".

"Sarira has trained thousands of pharmacists around Australia in mental health," Felkai said.

"Her passion for pharmacy drives her to improve the way pharmacists care for vulnerable patients with mental health issues and she is an integral researcher in this field.

"She is one of the lead investigators in the PharMIbridge



trial and has also led the development of training and educational resources which support perinatal women suffering from depression."

Meanwhile, Felkai noted that over the course of five decades, Cox's "advocacy for the profession has helped make Australian Pharmacy what it is today", while McCallum was recognised for the exceptional level of support he has provided to rural and regional communities during his internship.

## SA recognises pharmacist

**AUSSIE** Discount Chemist Group (ADCG) Director, Sobia Irfan Hashmi, has been recognised for her contribution to multiculturalism and intercultural understanding, by South Australian Governor, Frances Adamson.

Hashmi was presented the 2021 Governors' Multicultural Private Sector Award, on Thu night, for the efforts the ADCG and her TerryWhite Chemmart Cumberland Park store have made to support migrant communities.

"Thank you South Australia where our family received unlimited opportunities during our journey which we started as new immigrants in January 2003," she said.

"This award gives me lot more energy to do more to promote multiculturalism through my family pharmacy business."

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### Dispensary Corner

**IT'S** important to have plenty of dairy in your diet, but this seems somewhat ridiculous.

Two women have been convicted of "food stamp fraud" in the US state of Texas after an investigation into allegations they stole more than 49 tonnes of cheese slices, according to a CBS DFW report.

The pair, from the township of Brownsville, pleaded guilty to conspiring to defraud America's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which subsidises the cost of provisions for some families in need.

A 2016 probe found they and other co-conspirators had exchanged SNAP benefits for cash using a point of sale device at a butchery shop owned by one of the offenders.

A total of 715 fake transactions were uncovered, with the cheese stolen alongside 22 tonnes of pinto beans, 1.6 tonnes of coffee, 1.4 tonnes of instant mashed potatoes and more than 20,000 litres of mayonnaise to wash it all down.

It's alleged the stolen items were transported across the border to Mexico for resale.

The total theft was estimated at more than us\$1.2 million, with the women both sentenced to almost three years in prison.



## High-flying pharmacist



**HOT** air ballooning Capital Chemist pharmacist, Amanda Galbraith, is taking the group's brand sky-high this week as part of the Canberra Balloon Spectacular.

Having retired her original Capital Chemist balloon after 16 years of service (*PD* 09 Mar 2021), Galbraith launched a new-look version over Lake Burley Griffin on Sat.

The high-flying pharmacy owner got hooked on ballooning as a teenager, becoming one of Australia's youngest pilots almost three decades ago.

When she decided to buy a hot air balloon, together with some other Capital Chemist partners, they decided they may as well put the Capital Chemist logo on it, and the balloon has become a familiar sight in Canberra's sky ever since.

"We believe it's the only pharmacy-sponsored hot air balloon in the world," she said.

At the Canberra Balloon Spectacular, the balloon is usually piloted by Amanda's father Danny or brother Justin.

"The most well-known thing about the Capital Chemist balloon is how much we like to sail on the lake," she said.

"We call it splash and dash."

In addition to getting a new-look balloon for this year's event, Galbraith has also landed a prime launch site, beside this year's feature balloon, Tico The Sloth.

### Actemra SSSI extended to Apr

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has extended the Serious Scarcity Substitution Instrument for subcutaneous tocilizumab (Actemra) products until 30 Apr.

The TGA has advised pharmacists that Actemra ACTPen autoinjector and pre-filled syringe products will fluctuate during the shortage, recommending they should contact their wholesaler to check availability.



### Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Kaail Bohm**, 2021 Rhonda White Leadership Award Nominee, TerryWhite Chemmart Delroy, NSW.



#### Being a pharmacist comes with responsibility

**I AM** proud of the role our industry plays in providing better health outcomes for communities.

When COVID-19 cases were rising in Dubbo we knew we were about to be tasked with a huge responsibility to drive vaccination uptake. With a large indigenous population we had to ensure the message around the benefits of vaccination were appropriately delivered to this vulnerable cohort of the community.

As an Indigenous man I am aware of the resistance to travelling outside the community which means vaccination rates for our indigenous communities remain so low. I volunteered my time on weekends to go out to these communities, talk to its members and hopefully get a few vaccinated.

As pharmacists, we are perfectly positioned to use our local health resources to drive uptake in these vulnerable community settings and as health professionals, we have a great responsibility to do so.

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