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## CSO failing to deliver

**SUPPLY** chain issues are continuing to impact pharmacies in the NSW Northern Rivers region, despite floodwaters subsiding, Casino-based pharmacy owner, John Black, reports.

Speaking with *Pharmacy Daily*, Black said his store has been experiencing issues receiving stock from Community Service Obligation (CSO) wholesaler, Australian Pharmaceutical Industries (API), for more than two weeks, despite roads to the town being open since Wed 02 Mar.

With the majority of pharmacies in nearby Lismore out of action as a result of severe flooding in the town, and more than 4,000 people having lost their homes, Black said the store had seen an increase in prescription volumes, putting pressure on the store's stock management.

"If we were doing 250 scripts a day, we're doing 100 more now," he said.

"We were ordering from API... but stock's not coming... the roads are open, so there's no reason vans or lorries couldn't come.

"They have a CSO responsibility and a moral obligation to deliver."

Black told *Pharmacy Daily* that he

had experienced communication issues when dealing with the wholesaler, noting that he received a call from API telling him an order placed on Fri would not be delivered as scheduled on Sat, only to receive a subsequent message to say someone had attempted to drop it off after the store closed that afternoon, and it had been returned to the distribution centre in Brisbane.

Black added that other pharmacies in Casino were also experiencing problems securing stock.

"I was here last Sat, a call could've meant the order was delivered," he said.

"The people of the Northern Rivers feel politicians have failed them, and the CSO has also failed as far as I'm concerned.

"Another pharmacy owner here has a van, I could drive up to the distribution centre [with them] and get the stuff ourselves."

### Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today features three pages of news, plus a full page from **TerryWhite Chemmart**.

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## TWC COVAX milestone

**TERRYWHITE** Chemmart (TWC) is celebrating a major milestone in the COVID-19 vaccination (COVAX) campaign, with the group's stores administering more than one million doses to date - more than 18% of shots given through community pharmacies.

TWC Executive General Manager, Nick Munroe, noted that in the last three months the network has given more than 465,000 COVID-19 booster jabs.

While celebrating the high rate of uptake of COVAX shots, Munroe said with the influenza season on its way pharmacists need to encourage younger Australians to get the flu vaccine this year, with both viruses expected to circulate together.

See **page four** for more.

## Time for politicians to 'walk the walk'

**POLITICIANS** are being urged to show their support for pharmacies this Thu 17 Mar, by boosting fees paid for administering COVID-19 vaccines, to match those given to general practitioners.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has designated the day as *Thank Your Pharmacist Day*, to acknowledge the efforts the profession has made throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

PSA National President, Associate Professor Chris Freeman, said that pharmacists had gone above and beyond for their patients over the last two years, while dealing with "incredibly challenging conditions", and called on politicians to show their appreciation for the profession by delivering fairer remuneration.

"Time and time again throughout the pandemic, our politicians have lauded the impact of Australia's pharmacists, but this Thu, we're calling on them to take the next step by showing their thanks," he said.



"We would like to see politicians visit their local pharmacists to thank them for their efforts.

"They've talked the talk, now it's time for them to walk the walk by showing their gratitude.

"Pharmacists, like many healthcare workers, have had no reprieve throughout the pandemic.

"They've stayed open when many primary healthcare providers closed their doors.

"Yet, unfair and inequitable pay discrepancies exist. Pharmacists are

losing out.

"It's simple, pharmacists must be paid at the same rate as any other professional for providing the same service - but in certain instances, this isn't happening.

"As it stands, pharmacists are receiving substantially less than other immunisers for administering the same COVID-19 vaccine, an unfair pay disparity for providing exactly the same service - this is one of the many overlooked issues which requires urgent attention."

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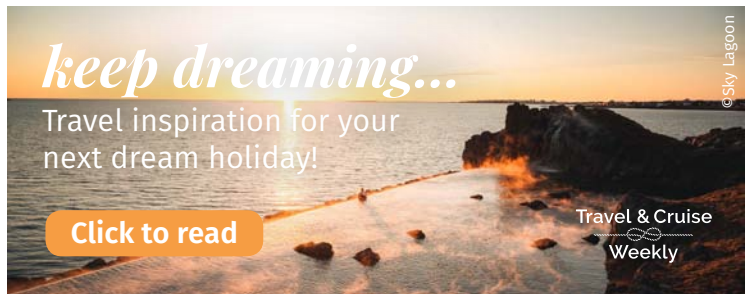
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## Dispensary Corner

**MANY** pharmacists who walk away from the profession cite low wages as a factor for their decision to abandon a career they spent years studying to pursue.

However, British pharmacist, Roxy Hamedi, has dropped out and taken a pay cut to seek fame and romance on reality TV show, *Geordie Shore: Hot Single Summer*, a spin-off series of MTV's long-running *Geordie Shore*.

The Aberdeen-born 28-year-old told *The Scottish Sun*, that the call-up to join the cast of the show came after missing out landing places on the UK's editions of *Love Island* and *Married At First Sight*.

Hamedi noted that the show exposed her to characters she would never have had the opportunity to meet if she had remained in pharmacy.

"Some of them didn't know what a pharmacist does," she said.

"I had to explain that I've got a degree... I was the only one there in that line of work, everyone [else] was a dancer, singer or something like that.

"They had really cool jobs and I felt mine was a bit basic in comparison."

Despite briefly dating a fellow cast member, Hamedi said she had failed to find the love of her life, but she added that her brush with fame is setting her up for the high-life.

"I got what I wanted in the end, [and] I want to turn myself into a brand and have my own empire," she said.

## GBMA Budget luncheon

**FEDERAL** Health Minister, Greg Hunt, and his Shadow counterpart, Mark Butler, are set to address the Generic and Biosimilar Medicines Association (GBMA) Budget Week luncheon, on 31 Mar.

GBMA's Independent Chair, Professor Jane Halton, noted the event would reflect on the final Budget - which will be delivered on 29 Mar - before the upcoming Federal election, and would be one of Hunt's final events before stepping away from politics.

Halton added that the organisation was committed to working with both sides of politics, as Australia emerges from the economic and health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, by boosting the use of biosimilar products.

"We know the last year has been particularly tough for many Australians, particularly those most vulnerable, and our priority has been to ensure every Australian can continue to have equitable and affordable access to safe medicines," she said.

"A key focus for the GBMA in 2022 will be to help the next Government implement policy levers that help drive the uptake of biosimilars.



"Biosimilars will offset the cost of the innovative but expensive biologic treatments that the Government is under pressure to subsidise."

GBMA CEO, Marnie Peterson, added that the sector was working to protect Australians against "international supply chain shocks", while "creating that all important headroom on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme that allows greater access to new medicines".

The event will take place on the same day as Australian Labor Party Leader, Anthony Albanese, is set to deliver his Budget reply.

## Pharmacy Guild Update

### Pharmacies praised

**THE** National President of the Pharmacy Guild, Trent Twomey, has praised community pharmacists and their staff affected by the Queensland and NSW floods.

"We know some have lost their practices and/or homes and our thoughts go out to them," Professor Twomey said.

"But in times of crisis pharmacists have always risen to the occasion and even those pharmacies severely hit by the floods have immediately sought ways to get back into their pharmacies and help their patients."

Pharmacies had gone above and beyond to try to get medicines to their patients.

"Despite being cut off from supply chains they have negotiated with other pharmacies to try to secure essential supplies," he said.

"They have also gone to great lengths to get to their pharmacies and open their doors to communities affected by the floods.

"Their resilience is the stuff of legends.

"We have seen examples of pharmacists hitching rides on jet skis and negotiating forest fire breaks to get to their pharmacies because access roads were cut."

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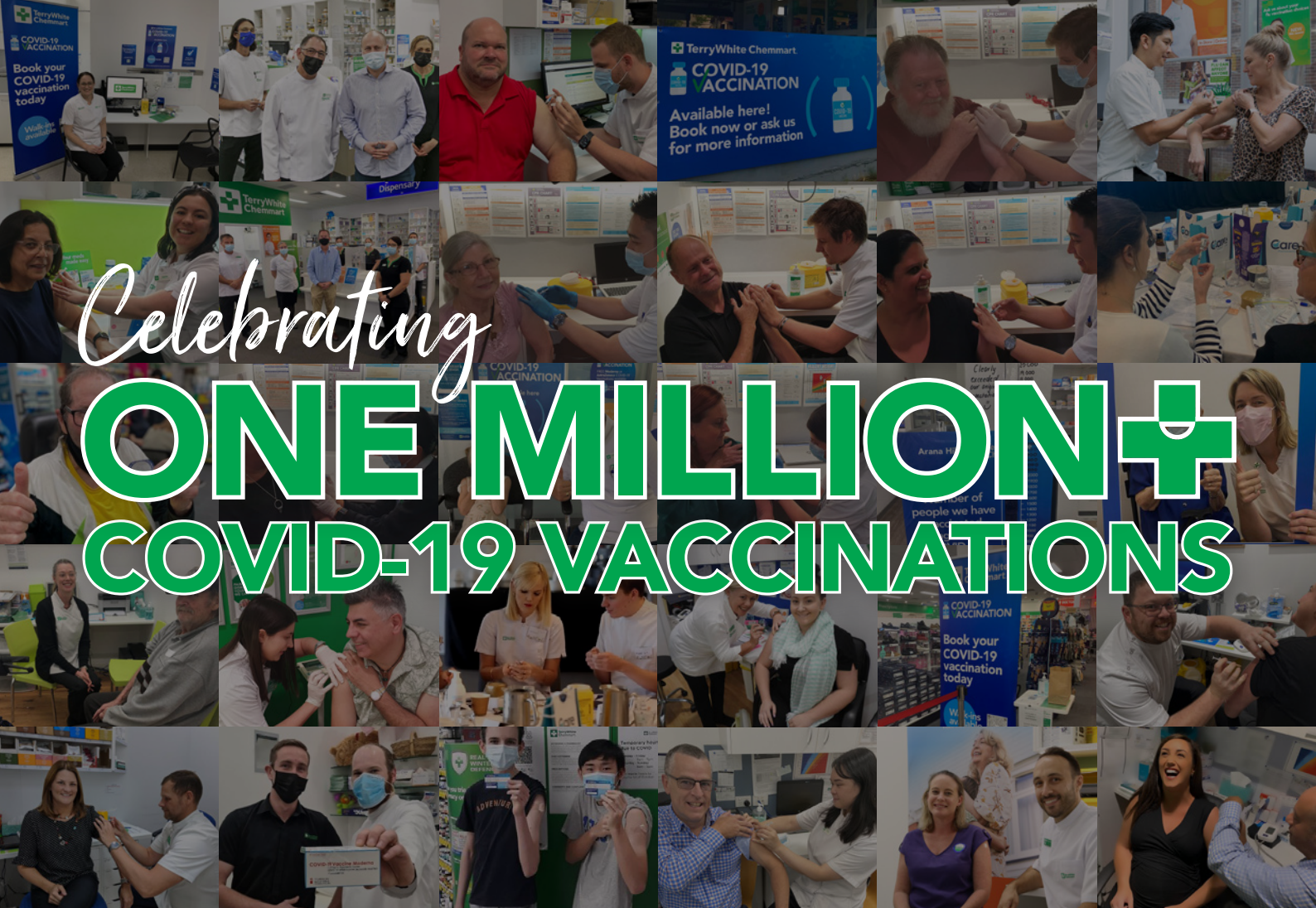
**EDITORIAL**  
 Editor in Chief and Publisher – Bruce Piper  
 Editor – Nicholas O'Donoghue  
 Contributors – Adam Bishop, Myles Stedman  
[info@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:info@pharmacydaily.com.au)

**ADVERTISING AND MARKETING**  
 Sean Harrigan, Hoda Alzubaidi  
[advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au)  
**BUSINESS MANAGER**  
 Jenny Piper  
[accounts@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:accounts@pharmacydaily.com.au)

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd  
 Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia  
 PO Box 1010 Epping NSW 1710 Australia  
 Tel: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760)  
 Sign up free at  
[www.pharmacydaily.com.au](http://www.pharmacydaily.com.au)

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