

Samuel launches attack on pharmacy

CLAIMS that patients in regional parts of Australia are paying five times more for some medicines than their metropolitan peers, are being dismissed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

Former Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) Chair, Graeme Samuel, launched a fresh attack on the Pharmacy Location Rules in an article published by the *Newcastle Herald* yesterday.

The article reported that research from "groups pushing the Federal Government to end" the Location Rules found that pharmacies operating in the Hunter region were charging significantly more for standard antibiotic syrups than discounters in metropolitan areas, who say they have been prevented from entering the area by the location rules.

The greatest price disparity was found at a Cessnock pharmacy where the medicine was 5.2 times more expensive than it would have been from a discounter.

"If you go into a town and there's one coffee shop and because of a lack of competition they charge \$15 for a cup of coffee you'd be pretty outraged," Samuel said.



"If there was only one petrol station in a town and you were charged \$4.50 per litre for petrol you'd be just as outraged.

"Yet because of these contracts between the Guild and the Federal Government that's the case for pharmaceuticals.

"There's no justification for these rules and they need to change because consumers are paying the price for the lack of competition."

However, a Guild spokesperson refuted suggestions that the community pharmacy sector had become a monopoly as a result of the Location Rules.

"When economists such as Graeme Samuel say there is no

competition among pharmacies and that pharmacy is a monopoly - we say there is plenty of competition where the price is not fixed by the Government," the spokesperson told *Pharmacy Daily*.

"Claims that a particular medicine costs five times more in rural areas than in the city are just self-serving and misleading spin.

"While Graeme Samuel or his soul brothers at Chemist Warehouse may be able to find an aberrant example here or there, there are literally millions of cases of subsidised medicines being dispensed under the PBS across Australia with no such price disparity."

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news plus a full page from *eze Allergy*.

Harvey confronts TGA complaints

PUBLIC Health advocate and long-time pharmaceutical industry watchdog, Professor Ken Harvey from Monash University, has deeply criticised the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and Health Minister Greg Hunt.

Urging *Choice Magazine* to write to Hunt about issues arising from the TGA performance report, Harvey referred to the TGA's failure to meet its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) - tga.gov.au.

Of 1,468 complaints received in 2018-19, only 66% were closed within the TGA's KPI timelines, he said.

He identified the loss of 74 TGA staff positions as a factor, adding that more than 90% of complaints were classed "low priority" and merely sent an "educational letter" with no further follow-up.

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APC standards

THE Australian Pharmacy Council (APC), in conjunction with the Pharmacy Council of New Zealand (PCNZ), has released its *Accreditation Standards for Pharmacy Programs in Australia and New Zealand 2020*.

Standards for degree and intern training programs have been formulated into a single set, which applies to both types of programs.

Five domains guide the standards descriptions: safe and accountable practice, governance and quality, program details, student/intern experience and outcomes and assessment.

Access the standards at pharmacycouncil.org.au.

PSA QLD honours West



QUEENSLAND pharmacists Gary West of Mermaid Waters (Lifetime Achievement Gold Medal), Vivien Hsu from Surfers' Paradise (Bowl of Hygeia Pharmacist of the Year), Brisbane's Nicolette Ellis (Early Career Pharmacist of the Year) and Emma Dall'Alba, from Malanda outside of Cairns (James Dare Graduate of the Year) have been recognised for their outstanding contribution to the health of Queenslanders in the Queensland Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) President's Awards presented at the Queensland Annual Therapeutic Update in Brisbane last weekend.

PSA Queensland President, Chris Campbell said he was delighted to congratulate this year's award winners.

"These awards highlight the impact pharmacists have through

the various roles and career pathways pharmacists can take in supporting safe, quality and effective use of medicines in the community," Campbell said.

"These winners demonstrate not only their commitment to the profession and innovative practice, but their dedication to improving the health of Queenslanders."

PSA also awarded Life Membership to William (Bill) Newman, James Delahunty and Dinah Fraser in recognition of 50 continuous years of PSA membership and contribution to the community in services to the profession.

Pictured, Gary West receiving the PSA Queensland Branch Lifetime Achievement Gold Medal, with Branch President, Chris Campbell.

Nominations for the 2020 President's Awards open Jul 2020.

Careers stalled

CALIFORNIAN pharmacy students' careers are being put on a temporary hold after questions for a key exam were leaked prior to the test being taken.

The California Board of Pharmacy announced earlier this month that the results of 1,400 would-be pharmacists who sat the California Practice Standards and Jurisprudence Exam (CPJE) in July have been invalidated as a result of the leak.

The California Pharmacists Association (CPA) accused the Board of overstepping its mission by striking out the results of the exam, in an open letter sent last week.

"The charge of the Board of Pharmacy is to protect and promote the health and safety of Californians by pursuing the highest quality of pharmacist's care and the appropriate use of pharmaceuticals through education, communication, licensing, legislation, regulation, and enforcement," the CPA said.

"By further delaying the licensure of otherwise qualified and ethical pharmacists to provide the highest quality pharmacists' care, the Board is shirking its responsibility to the consumers of California."

The Board has announced students will be able to resit the exam on 16 or 17 Nov, with Dec dates being considered.



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Zantac pulled

SANOFI has become the second sponsor of heartburn medication, Zantac (ranitidine), to withdraw the product from their market over contamination concerns.

The French pharmaceutical company pulled the drug from the US and Canadian markets last week, following a similar decision by GlaxoSmithKline in a number of countries.



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Dispensary Corner

REFERENCING the latest research on a particular topic while networking at conference can show your peers that you've been keeping up to speed.

However, before peacocking your deep insight into particular topic in front of a new acquaintance, remember that you're at a conference, they might know a bit about the issue too.

Just ask Adelaide-based clinical pain neuroscientist, Tasha Stanton.

The South Australian issued a warning on Sun to conference goers on Twitter, after an amusing encounter with a fellow attendee.

"Friends at conferences - please do not assume that people that you talk to do not know anything," she said.

"I just got told that I should read what Stanton et al found about pain.

"I AM STANTON".

The neuroscientist stressed that she didn't expect someone to know what she looked like, but noted that the conversation "had more of a condescending tone with recommendations of what I should read, which happened to be my paper".

The tweet has attracted plenty of comments with many wondering how she responded to what some described as "mansplaining".

"Oh, I literally said, 'I am Stanton,' and smiled sweetly", she said.

That may well have been the sweetest response - would've been nice to see the reaction.

PSA Tas marks success

THE sixth annual Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) Tasmanian Pharmacist Dinner in South Hobart this week saw Tasmanian pharmacists honoured for their outstanding contributions to the health of Tasmanians in the Tasmanian Pharmacist Awards.

Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) President Peter Fowler (pictured right) from Launceston, was the recipient of the Tasmanian Pharmacist Lifetime Achievement Award.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels said the prestigious award befits Fowler's position leading Australia's hospital pharmacists and technicians at a transformative time for the profession.

Fredrik Hellqvist, owner of Dover Pharmacy, Dover, and founder of Small Pharmacies Group, was announced Tasmanian Pharmacist of the Year.

Hellqvist emigrated to Australia from Sweden in 2005 and managed a compounding pharmacy in Orange, NSW before moving to Tasmania in 2013, where he purchased Dover pharmacy.

The Small Pharmacies Group was founded within a year, initially as an online community, giving a voice to 300 pharmacists in small pharmacies.

The Tasmanian Early Career Pharmacist Award was presented to



Dana McLennan (pictured below) of New Town, whose career started in a range of community pharmacy and hospital roles.

McLennan joined Lenah Valley Calvary Hospital, a 400-bed facility, as the sole clinical pharmacist in late 2016.

In this role, McLennan introduced clinical services and multi-disciplinary team meetings to liaise with the nurse unit managers to identify the priority and at risk patients.

This initiative was then taken up with other allied health within the hospital and has resulted in improved patient care.

She was also instrumental in developing the on-call training service for all pharmacists with mobile resources and references for when on call.

These training modules are now used as mandatory training for all pharmacists joining HPS sites in Southern Tasmania.

The awards, jointly hosted by the Tasmanian branches of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia and the University of Tasmania, recognise outstanding achievement in supporting the quality and safe use of medicines.



Labelling shifts

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has posted on its website support resources for health professionals to help them communicate labelling changes - see tga.gov.au.



Guild Update

Learning boost

GUILDED has had a bumper CPD year with an increase of 20,000 assessments completed on the platform compared to the last CPD year.

This result emphasises the importance of high-quality, accredited CPD that is easy to access anywhere, anytime.

A total of 123,205 assessments were completed on the platform in the 18/19 CPD year and more than 30 new CPD accredited courses were made available.

With the commencement of a new CPD year, pharmacists are encouraged to visit GuildEd now and create their Learning Plan using GuildEd's free myLearning Plan tool.

More than 50,000 pharmacists and pharmacy assistants are now registered to GuildEd and we look forward to continuing to support the pharmacy workforce in their learning needs.

Please contact the Guild Learning and Development team on 1800 049 056 or email learninganddevelopment@guild.org.au for more information.

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