

## NSW pharmacy mental health hubs

**MORE** than 700 pharmacists and pharmacy staff across NSW have registered to take part in mental health training under a State Government-funded drought relief extension package.

Speaking in the NSW Legislative Council earlier this week, Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, Bronnie Taylor, praised the Pharmacy Guild of Australia NSW Branch's efforts in promoting the program designed to make regional pharmacies "safe spaces" for patients.

"People trust their pharmacists and this training equips more allied health professionals in our regions with the skills to recognise and respond to mental health needs," she said.

"In 2021 the mental health community pharmacy training program will deliver at least 100 training workshops to over 5,000 pharmacists and staff across eight drought affected rural or regional

local health districts in NSW.

The Guild has engaged experts, who have developed the courses tailored specifically for pharmacists.

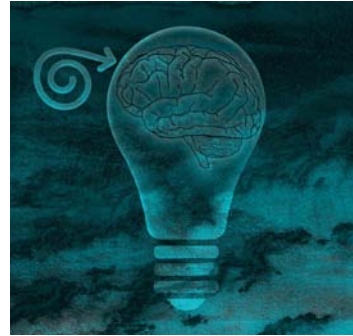
"The courses on offer include blended mental health first aid and workshops that focus on depression, anxiety, trauma-informed care and suicide prevention.

"In addition to the planned workshops, 74 blended mental health first aid courses are scheduled from Oct 2020 to Jun 2021.

"Over 700 pharmacists and staff are already registered for courses, with more courses still being added to the program.

"Due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19 most training is being delivered via self-paced online learning or a live virtual classroom.

"The silver lining is that this benefits many regional and rural pharmacy staff who will not need to travel away from their communities



to attend training.

Face-to-face workshops are also being planned for Newcastle, Orange and Dubbo.

"Pharmacists play a crucial role in rural and regional New South Wales. It is an extremely well-respected profession.

"As a nurse, I would often consult with a pharmacist.

"GPs and doctors will say that a pharmacist's knowledge of medication often far surpasses their own."

Today's issue of *PD*

*Pharmacy Daily* today features four pages of news.

## APC releases IWE results

**PHARMACY** interns across Australia have received their Intern Written Exam (IWE) results after a challenging year, the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) reports.

APC CEO, Bronwyn Clark, noted more than 1,300 interns have become eligible to register as pharmacists, following the IWE, which was conducted online and at test centres across the country.

"The online proctored exams were a big success," Clark said.

"The similarities of scores between the two groups means we have an equal and fair process across the two delivery modes."

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## Reprimand for self-dispensing

A WESTERN Australian pharmacist's registration has been suspended for two months and she has received a reprimand after admitting to self-dispensing Schedule 4 medications without a prescription.

A WA Administrative Tribunal heard Michelle Fall had engaged in professional misconduct by taking the medications without a script, or paying for them, and making false and misleading entries in her workplace's electronic records system.

The Tribunal placed conditions requiring Fall to undertake education at the conclusion of a two-month suspension with a six-month review period.

The education is required to include a Pharmacy Board of Australia approved program on appropriate dispensing, ethical decision making and record keeping.

Fall was also ordered to pay a contribution towards the Board's cost of the proceedings.

## Pharmacy must look after its young

AUSTRALIA'S pharmacy profession needs to review how interns are prepared to enter the workforce, Commonwealth Department of Health Special Advisor and pharmacist, Emeritus Professor, Lloyd Sansom AO, believes.

Responding to comments made during a webinar last night by Pharmacists' Support Service (PSS) Executive Officer, Kay Dunkley, that a lot of early career pharmacists and interns have expressed disillusionment with the profession, Sansom said the profession needed to "look after its young".

Dunkley noted that the lack of accreditation for intern placements has led to a number of graduates working in "not very ideal environments as they're going through their intern year and then when they come out into the profession they often become quite disillusioned, and it's not just around the low pay, it's also around job satisfaction, the environment and the lack of support from the manager or owner of the pharmacy".

Sansom described the quality assurance around internships as "a vexed question", adding that

intern training providers (ITPs) have a critical role in supporting young pharmacists through to registration.

"You may remember a few years ago the [Pharmacy] Board [of Australia] tried to require certain attributes from preceptors and the number of preceptors decreased by 50% overnight," he said.

"I think the ITPs have a critical role in this.

"They are the only third party which actually interacts with these people on a regular basis...I'm wondering whether your experience with some of these issues [Kay], is really recognising that the ITPs have a responsibility broader than whether or not the professional development programs are right, but their the personal and professional development is right.

"Unless anyone looks after its young the species will die," he said.

"That's dramatic, but that's what it's about...you've got to nurture these kids.

"I know what a pharmacy course is now, I know what I went through, and I know what I taught, and it's a completely different world [today].

"These people are prepared intellectually and academically,



what they are not prepared for is professionally and emotionally.

"We don't expose them to that in the way that medicine does for example - it's not an immediate solution, but in the longer term we need to look at this issue."

Sansom added that the script-focused nature of many pharmacies "might be alright for the business, but isn't any good for the profession".

"They're expected to sit there and do 300 scripts a day and you can't counsel much, because you've got to do the scripts," he said.

## Border openings welcomed by Guild

MOVES to open Queensland's borders to visitors from Victoria and Greater Sydney from 01 Dec is being welcomed by the organisers of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference (APP).

Former Guild National President and APP Convenor, Kos Sclavos, described the State Government's decision to reopen



the borders as a positive step forward, ahead of the return of an in-person APP in May 2021, after the event was held in a virtual forum this year.

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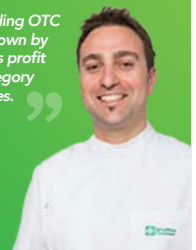
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# No increase in errors with e-Scripts

**PHARMACISTS'** indemnity insurer, Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL) is urging pharmacists to be vigilant when dispensing electronic prescriptions, particularly around any changes to workflow.

In a practice alert issued yesterday, PDL confirmed dispensing of e-scripts is covered under the PDL Master Policy, "as these prescriptions are treated by the policy in a similar manner to paper prescriptions".

The insurer also reported that "at this time, PDL has not seen an increase in errors associated with e-scripts".

However, PDL warned that "any change or interruption to normal prescription workflow may lead to errors so the introduction of e-script processing should be carefully considered".

"Extra monitors or devices will be necessary for efficient workflow, especially for unimpeded checking of the dispensed item against

the electronic version of the prescription," the alert said.

"The checking of prescriptions awaiting collection is an aspect of the supply process that needs to be considered.

"Presently, medicines awaiting collection are usually placed in a basket along with the paper prescription so a pharmacist can double-check and counsel before handing out the medication.

"Without a hard copy to refer to, an easily accessible monitor or screen should be available to check the dispensed medicines against the electronic version of the prescription.

"The patient's details as they appear on a paper prescription will not be available to confirm the patient's identity so other steps must be taken to ensure the medicine is supplied to the correct patient."

PDL urged pharmacists to review the relevant State or Territory



legislation and local Health Department websites to ensure they understand the integration of e-scripts into local regulations.

Pharmacists were also reminded that they should never assume that all data has been accurately transferred as there may be instances where a portion of the e-script has been incorrectly transcribed into the dispensing program.

## PA e-script guide

**PHARMACY Assistants (PAs)** are set to play a key part in supporting and educating patients about the rollout of electronic prescriptions over the coming months, with Guild Learning and Development launching a free online training guide to assist them.

The *Electronic prescriptions: A guide for pharmacy assistants* module introduces the different ways that e-scripts can be presented in a pharmacy - via token or Active Script List - and help PAs to answer questions that patients might have about their e-scripts.

PAs can enrol in the course, developed with the Australian Digital Health Agency through the Guild Learning and Development website [HERE](#).

For more information email: [learninganddevelopment@guild.org.au](mailto:learninganddevelopment@guild.org.au).

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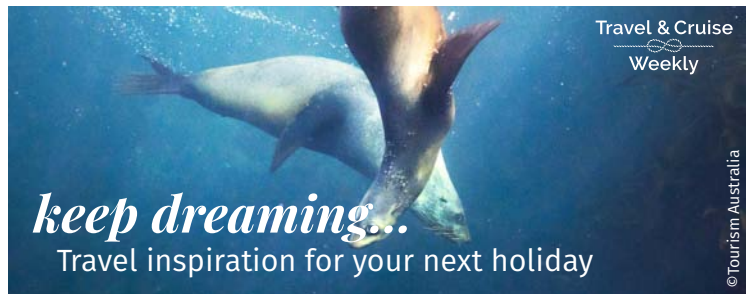
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## Guild Qld Branch gets fresh faces

**PHARMACY** owners, Manj Singh and Andy Hawken are set to join the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's Queensland Branch Committee in Feb 2021, following the organisation's "Stage One" elections.

Singh has been elected to represent the Wide Bay Burnett district, succeeding incumbent, Vikesh Kumar, while Hawken will replace Central Queensland representative, Allan Milostic.

Confirming the make-up of the committee, Branch President, Trent Twomey - who was elected unopposed in Far North Queensland, said the group will continue to work to promote the value of community pharmacy as a vital part of the State's primary care system.

"I welcome our new Branch Committee representatives," Twomey said.

"The new committee will continue to proactively work to represent, serve and fight for Guild members and the future of community pharmacy.

"We've already seen tremendous progress this year with community pharmacists serving on the COVID-19 pandemic frontline and embracing technology and innovation, they have been central to how communities have stayed safe and well."

Twomey thanked Kumar and

Milostic for their service to the Committee, noting they will remain in place until the end of Feb.

The new committee will see Twomey represent Far North Queensland, with former Guild National President, Kos Sclavos, Australian College of Pharmacy President, Chris Owen, Rick Xynias, Amanda Seeto and Fiona Watson, returned as the members for the Brisbane region.

Pharmacy owners in North Queensland will be represented by Cate Whalan, with Lucy Walker taking the South West Queensland seat, James Lester standing for those on the Sunshine Coast, and Paul Jaffar on the Gold Coast, alongside Singh and Hawken.

Stage Two of the election process is ongoing, with Committee Members across all States and Territories eligible to nominate for branch and national leadership roles until 07 Dec.



## Dispensary Corner

**THE** run of bad luck for a British man in India must surely come to an end soon.

Ian Jones, who was working for a charity in Rajasthan, is recovering in hospital after being bitten by a cobra.

As if that's not bad enough, his time in the country has already seen him suffer from malaria, dengue fever and COVID-19.

Jones has survived the snake bite but is currently blind and his legs are paralysed from the venom, although doctors are hopeful he will eventually make a full recovery.

**SHORTAGES** in some types of Personal Protective Equipment may be in the offing, after the world's largest maker of latex gloves was forced to close more than half of its factories due to a coronavirus outbreak.

Malaysia-based Top Glove has been doing exceptionally well through the pandemic as demand for its products soared, but this week confirmed an in-house screening program has found almost 2,500 of its staff tested positive for COVID-19.

That was an infection rate of around 40%, with the company's 41 factories employing many workers from nearby Nepal who live in crowded dormitories.

A total of 28 of the plants are being shut temporarily to try to control the outbreak, which is the latest issue being dealt with by Top Glove management who have also been accused of exploiting their low-paid workforce.



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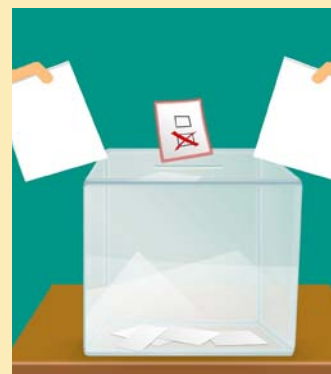
## Todd wins PDL SA/NT Director race

**FORMER** Pharmacy Guild of Australia South Australia Branch President, Ian Todd, has been elected as the incoming Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL) South Australia and Northern Territory Director.

Todd topped the poll ahead of incumbent Director, Paula Kwan, and NPS MedicineWise CEO, Steve Morris.

PDL Chair, Paul Naismith, noted that Todd brings significant experience to the Board, having been involved in negotiations for the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreements.

"We would like to extend our congratulations to Ian and



welcome him to the PDL Board," he said.

Naismith also confirmed that PDL Queensland Director and Board Deputy Chair, Gilbert Yeates, has retained his position.