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Tambassis set for Guild exit in 2021

PHARMACY Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis (pictured), will not contest the upcoming Victorian Branch Committee elections, opening the door for fresh faces.

Speaking to *Pharmacy Daily*, Tambassis said he had decided to step aside at the end of his current term in Feb 2021, after seven years as National President and 15 years as a Guild representative.

"I've had the privilege and honour to run the Guild at the national level for three terms," he said.

"We were successful in signing the [Seventh Community Pharmacy] Agreement (7CPA) back in Jun, so after that I weighed it all up and said it's now time to step aside from the role.

"I see it as an honour and a privilege to sign the two Agreements that I signed...we broke a lot of ground with the 6CPA, with the Administration Handling Infrastructure (AHI) fee, we stopped that downward spiral of

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) remuneration - that was a lot of work we did five years ago.

"I had a few options, I could stay on the branch committee for example, renominate, but that would make a big difference for a younger person that wanted to start at the Guild, because I would've blocked that person, or triggered another election."

Tambassis told *Pharmacy Daily* that a lot of work remains to be done in the run-up to the end of his presidency in Feb 2021, noting that once he steps away from the role he intends to put the years of advocacy into practice.

He thanked his business partners for giving him the freedom to lead the Guild.

With the Guild branch elections currently underway, the Victorian Branch has confirmed nine of its 12 electoral districts are not being contested, with Melbourne pharmacists, Megan Kazantzis, confirmed as Tambassis's successor



in District Four, while Brendan Green will represent District 12, replacing George Brooks.

Districts Two, Three and 11 are being contested, with current Branch President, Anthony Tassone, retaining his seat in District Five.

Kazantzis told *Pharmacy Daily* that she was looking forward to be appointed, saying, "it's a passion of mine to get more women into ownership and into leadership positions".

"I hope I am able to inspire other women to get more involved," she said.

Today's issue of *PD*

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, including a sector analysis report as part of the **Pharmacy Guild of Australia's** weekly update plus a full page from **Willach**.



CHP Australia Industry Update

National Preventive Health Strategy

As public consultation on the proposed Strategy closes, Consumer Healthcare Products Australia emphasises how;

- embedding support for self-care can enhance preventive health action,
- empowering individuals to take more ownership and responsibility for their health outcomes is essential to the Strategy's success and,
- focus areas that have the most tangible impact on mitigating the damage of COVID-19 and Australia's health and healthcare resilience to future infectious diseases should be afforded priority.

A new report released by the Mitchell Institute highlights the effectiveness of self-care in improving health and well-being for individuals and communities.

As illustrated in the report, self-care offers an explicit strategy for combating COVID-19, future infectious diseases, and the burden of preventable and chronic diseases.

[Read more here](#)

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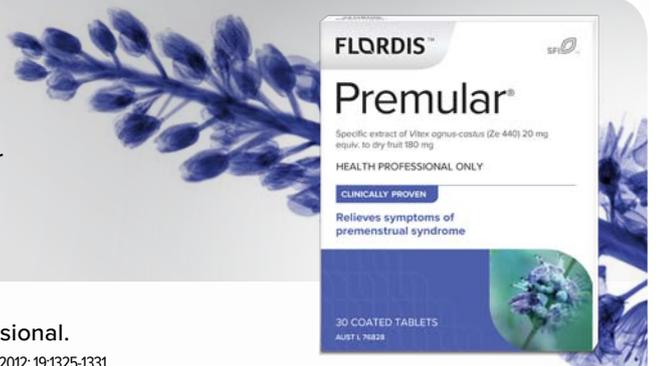
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*Schellenberg R, et al., BMJ 2001;322:134-137. Berger D, et al., Arch Gynecol Obstet 2000;264:150-153. Schellenberg R, et al., Phytomedicine 2012; 19:1325-1331





Corum raises cap

LISTED pharmacy software specialist Corum Health has closed its \$5.6 million capital raising (*PD* 31 Aug), with acceptances for just over 52% of the total entitlements available under the offer, raising \$2.94 million.

The shortfall has been covered by the offer's underwriter PAC Partners, with the proceeds to see Corum take full control of the PharmX electronic ordering gateway.

TGA lead alert

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is probing a report of the presence of dangerous levels of lead and other heavy metals in the Ayurvedic medicine Manasmithra Vatika.

The product was supplied to practitioners and patients in NSW and Vic, with the TGA warning taking the items could result in lead poisoning.

Sub-register gives workforce boost

AUSTRALIA'S pharmacy workforce has received a 6.5% boost in the numbers of general, provisional and limited registration holders since Mar, new data from the Pharmacy Board of Australia reveals.

The sub-register, launched earlier this year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (*PD* 02 Apr), has brought 1,952 retired or former pharmacists back to the profession, with a total of 33,554 pharmacists registered to practice as of 30 Jun, up from 31,503 on 31 Mar.

The latest figures from the Board showed the number of pharmacists holding non-practising registration fell from 1,274 in Mar to 958 in Jun - a decline of almost 25% in the quarter.

Numbers of general registration holders were up across all states and territories in Jun, with those reporting no principle place of practice up 85% to 574 compared with Mar (310).

Provisional and limited registration numbers remained largely static through the second quarter of 2020.



The recent Board figures showed a significant rise in the number of registrants aged over 65 years (2,164), compared with the previous quarter (1,618), with the numbers of registered pharmacists aged 80 or older jumping by 50% to 255, with 80% of those registrants holding general registration.

The under 25 age bracket was the only group to see a dip in numbers, down by 189 registrants in Jun compared with the Mar figures, including a fall of 140

general registration holders.

The profession continues to be female dominated with 62.7% of the profession registering as female, down 0.4% compared with the Board's Mar report.

The ACT and Northern Territory were the only jurisdictions to report an increase in the proportion of female pharmacists.

Tasmania was the only state where female pharmacists accounted for less than 60% of registrants - dipping from 60.6% female in Mar, to 59.4% in Jun.

Arrotex to fill Asasantin SR void

PATIENTS will continue to have access to a PBS-subsidised dipyridamole and aspirin combination, with the discontinued Asasantin SR able to be substituted with Diasp SR from Arrotex.

Arrotex said it was taking steps to ensure the Australian market had greater supply of Diasp SR following the discontinuation of Asasantin SR, with the company saying supply would build over time and anticipating stock will become locally available in the

coming weeks.

The dipyridamole and aspirin combination is used to prevent the recurrence of ischaemic stroke or transient cerebral ischaemic events.

"As the largest supplier to the PBS by volume, Arrotex is committed to ensuring Australian patients have ongoing access to their medicines," the firm said.

Diasp SR has been 'a' flagged by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme as bioequivalent and interchangeable with Asasantin.

Self-care key for prevention - CHP

CONSUMER Health Products (CHP) Australia has released its submission to a National Health Preventive Health Strategy consultation currently being undertaken by the Federal Department of Health.

The organisation emphasised the ways that embedding support for self-care can enhance preventive health action, adding that "empowering individuals to take more ownership and responsibility for their health

outcomes is essential to the Strategy's success".

CHP also urged the development of a robust strategy to combat health misinformation, particularly given the evolving power and influence of social media.

CHP Australia CEO Deon Schoombie said "the value of responsible self-care for individuals, healthcare systems and protecting public health has never been more apparent".

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Dispensary Corner

LIFE goes on despite coronavirus - well, sort of.

A 57-year-old Romanian politician who sadly succumbed to COVID-19 has been re-elected as mayor, about a week after his death in hospital.

Ion Aliman was running for this third term heading up the southern town of Deveselu, but during the campaign he tested positive for the novel coronavirus.

His condition deteriorated and unfortunately he died last week - but that didn't deter his ardent supporters, with Aliman winning the election in a landslide.

The local election bureau said Aliman's name remained on the ballot because the papers had been printed before his untimely demise.

After his victory his fans "headed to the cemetery to celebrate," according to local Romanian media.

POLICE in Florida, USA are investigating the extremely bizarre theft of cat blood from a veterinary clinic.

Officers are tracking a man caught on surveillance video in connection with the alleged larceny, after he was seen suspiciously inspecting a "blood box" awaiting pickup by a pathology clinic.

A few minutes later a truck pulled up and a man wearing the same clothing walked to the clinic with his face shielded and stole the box.

The Anastasia Cat Clinic said the four vials of feline blood were worth about \$600.

Rigby ends NPS service

PHARMACEUTICAL Society of Australia (PSA) Lifetime Achievement Award winner, Debbie Rigby (pictured), has stepped down as a director of NPS MedicineWise after 12 years with the organisation.

NPS Chair, Dr Andrew Knight, praised Rigby's contribution to the Board over the years.

"Debbie's extensive experience, insights and understanding of the challenges faced by pharmacists, combined with her influence and corporate knowledge, has benefited our continued support of the pharmacy sector," he said.

"During her 12 years as non-executive director on the NPS MedicineWise board, one of the focuses of her work was as a member and former chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.

"Debbie works with a forthright and methodical approach, and always demonstrated a high capacity of commitment to the NPS MedicineWise board and our mission to enable the best decisions about medicines and health technologies.



"We thank Debbie for her important contribution on the NPS MedicineWise board, congratulate her on her Lifetime Achievement Award from the PSA, and wish her continued success in her future endeavours."

Rigby is a member of the Department of Veteran Affairs' MATES Practitioner Reference Group, a Clinical Lead Reference to the Australian Digital Health Agency, a senior lecturer at the University of Queensland's School of Pharmacy, and a Visiting Fellow at Queensland University of Technology.

Guild Update

Sector analysis report

ONE of the significant things to come out of World Pharmacists Day last week was the World Pharmacy Council's sector analysis of COVID-19 and community pharmacy.

The report highlighted the role of community pharmacies during the COVID-19 crisis, the incredible service that has been provided to patients, and the steps that need to be taken to deal even more effectively with future pandemics.

The report promises to be a valuable advocacy resource in highlighting the importance of maintaining a viable, well-distributed, highly accessible network of community pharmacies.

The demands on community pharmacy staff and resources have been immense during this time. Throughout the crisis, there has been growing recognition of pharmacy's role in public health, in the management of chronic conditions and common ailments, as local health hubs.

The goal - for pharmacy organisations, governments and regulators - should now be to act on this real world evidence and lessons, by permanently unlocking the full scope and capability of community pharmacy.

The report can be found at <https://www.guild.org.au/about-us/advocacy/>.

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