

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news.

Momentous day

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has hailed the start of the national rollout of COVID-19 vaccines as "a momentous day" with Victorian pharmacists among the first Australians to be immunised.

PSA National President, Associate Professor Chris Freeman, noted that the Northern Territory, South Australia and Victoria have joined Queensland in implementing measures to allow pharmacist immunisers to administer COVID-19 vaccines.

NSW, Tasmania, Western Australia and the ACT are also expected to update legislation to facilitate pharmacist administration of the vaccines.

Students to play role in vax rollout

PHARMACY students, interns and registered pharmacists - including those who are non-immunisers - will be able to support the Victorian Government's rollout of COVID-19 vaccines under an emergency order gazetted on Sun.

The order, which granted approval for pharmacist immunisers to administer COVID-19 shots, paves the way for fourth year students and interns to undertake "authorised vaccination activities" such as drawing up the vaccine and labelling it in preparation to be given to a patient.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, welcomed the order, saying it was essential for the whole health workforce to be engaged in the vaccination campaign.

"The Victorian Branch of the Guild welcomes the regulatory approval of pharmacist immunisers being authorised to administer the COVID-19 vaccination in

our state which is very timely as community pharmacies await a response to expressions of interest for participation in the Australian Government's COVID-19 vaccine program," he said.

"We also welcome the ability for other parts of our pharmacy workforce: registered pharmacists who are non-immunisers, intern pharmacists and fourth year pharmacy students to be able to participate in the COVID-19 vaccine rollout through undertaking authorised vaccination activities such as drawing up doses and labelling syringes in preparation of doses being administered to patients.

"Not only will it be a team effort across the entire health profession and nation in order to maximise vaccination levels, it also will be at the individual pharmacy and practice level to deliver the best care possible for patients.

"This announcement will help community pharmacies prepare



for the COVID-19 vaccine rollout should they be successful in their application for the expression of interest which closed last Fri to participate.

"There has been a strong level of interest at both a Victorian state level and nationally for pharmacies wanting to participate in the Australian government's COVID-19 vaccine program."

CLICK HERE to read the *Victorian Government Gazette* in full.

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Tassie celebrates pharmacy's finest

TASMANIA celebrated four of its top pharmacists at the State's Pharmacist of the Year Awards.

The event held as part of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's Tasmanian Pharmacy Conference last weekend, and co-hosted with the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) and the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA), saw hospital pharmacist, Duncan McKenzie, named as the Pharmacist of the Year for his efforts in preparing the State's hospital system for increased COVID-19 hospitalisations over the last 12 months.

SHPA Tasmanian Branch Chair, Michelle Paine, hailed McKenzie's work throughout the pandemic.

"In collaboration with the Emergency Control Centre, Duncan managed supplies of critical medication to ensure that the hospital system could care for those who were hospitalised with COVID-19," she said.

Community pharmacist, Rhys Jones, was named as the 2021 Lifetime Achievement Award winner, with PSA Tasmanian Branch President, Dr Ella Van Tienen,

heralding him as a "quiet achiever".

"His commitment and passion for the profession has seen him take on a variety of leadership roles including Chair of the Tasmanian Pharmacy Authority (TPA), President of Arthritis Tasmania and Board Member of Arthritis Australia, to name a few," she said.

"Other roles Rhys has held over the years include being an intern examiner for TPA and AHPRA, examiner for Australian Pharmacy Examining Council and a Competency Committee Member for TPA."

For the first time the Tasmanian Early Career Pharmacist of the Year Award was shared, with community pharmacist, Jack Muir Wilson, and hospital pharmacist, Phil Tibbits, being awarded the title.

New Guild Tasmanian Branch President, Helen O'Byrne, noted the two Burnie-based pharmacists had played vital roles in providing medication services in the region during the COVID-19-induced lockdown.

"As co-owner of Wilkinson's Pharmacy, Jack gave invaluable support to his community during



the North West outbreak, providing advice, essential medicines, and vaccinations to an anxious community, juggling all manner of logistical, administrative and clinical requests that presented during this time," O'Byrne said.

"As the clinical team leader at North West Regional Hospital, Phil displayed exceptional leadership in managing a clinical service leading up to and during the COVID-19 outbreak at North West Regional Hospital, including setting up a remote clinical pharmacy process that allowed pharmacists from outside of the quarantined area to complete comprehensive medication histories for COVID-19 positive patients."

APC Director role

THE Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) is seeking nominations for a Director of Examinations to lead its Examinations Team.

The new position reports to the APC's Executive Director Professional Services and will be responsible for ensuring high-quality, robust, defensible and transparent examination services.

CLICK HERE for more information.

Hospital pharmacy prepped for COVAX

HOSPITAL pharmacists are playing a key role in delivering the first of Australia's doses of COVID-19 vaccines, Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia CEO, Kristin Michaels says.

"After spending months preparing for their central role in the safe and secure administration of the biggest vaccination program in history, we are now seeing many examples of the great work of pharmacists and technicians across Australia as

they deftly co-ordinate the ultra-low temperature storage, supply and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines; and undertake the thawing, diluting, preparing, and drawing-up of vaccine doses. In some hospitals, pharmacists will also be administering COVID-19 vaccinations," she said.

Pharmacists involved in the early phases of the COVAX campaign said they have trained to manage the end-to-end process from storage to reconstituting vials.



Guild Update

Greg Hunt to open APP2021

THE Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, will address delegates at the opening plenary of the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference and Trade Exhibition (APP) on Thursday 20 May.

APP2021 Conference Convenor, Kos Sclavos AM, said the announcement highlighted the significance of community pharmacy in national health policy.

"Everyone knows that Minister Hunt is the busiest minister in the Federal Cabinet at the moment, leading the Australian Government's COVID-19 vaccination rollout. We are thrilled that he has committed to attend APP in person on the Gold Coast," Mr Sclavos said.

"We look forward to hearing the Minister's key messages to the pharmacy profession."

The APP2021 Opening Plenary on Thursday 20 May.

The opening plenary will highlight the achievements and challenges faced by the Guild and the industry in the past 12 months, and showcase several awards of excellence, including the Pharmacy of the Year, Intern of the Year and Pharmacy Assistant of the Year.





Dispensary Corner

VACCINES are all well and good - but a pair of spectacles is also apparently a good way to protect yourself from COVID-19.

That's the intriguing result of a new study in India, which has found people who wear glasses may be up to three times less likely to be infected by coronavirus.

The research, which has not yet been peer-reviewed, looked at 304 people at a hospital in northern India over a two week period last year, according to a report in *The Independent*.

All of the patients, aged between 10 and 80, had reported COVID-19 symptoms, and the scientists specifically studied how many times they touched their faces.

About one in five said they wore glasses most of the time - and they apparently rubbed their eyes much less frequently than those who did not.

The report found overall participants touched their faces 23 times per hour, and their eyes an average of three times per hour, noting that "touching and rubbing of the eyes with contaminated hands may be a significant route of infection".

"Long term use of spectacles may prevent repeated touching and rubbing of the eyes," the researchers concluded.



Guild election turnout was just 37.6%

FEWER than two in every five eligible Pharmacy Guild of Australia members cast a ballot in the second stage of the organisation's elections, data from the Australian Electoral Commission reveals.

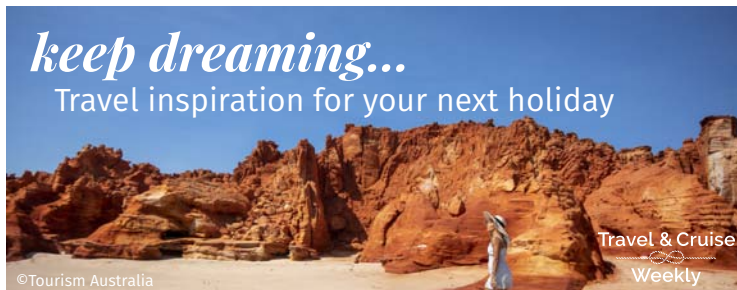
Of 2,377 members just 37.6% cast votes for candidates standing for branch committee posts in the NT, NSW, South Australia and Victoria.

The NT branch recorded the highest percentage turnout with two in every three members casting a vote in a tight race for the presidency won by Peter Hatwell ahead of Travis Lindsay (**PD** 19 Feb).

In NSW 45% of voters engaged in the election, returning Branch President, David Heffernan, with 59% of the ballot, ahead of Paul Jones (30%) and Tim Hewitt (11%).

Roughly 43% of NSW Guild members cast votes for the branch's three Vice President posts - Judith Plunkett (20%), Adele Tahan (19.5%) and Catherine Bronger (18.5%) - and the two National Councillor roles - Plunkett (27.5%) and Tahan (25%).

Victorian voters were most concerned about who would join Branch President, Anthony Tassone, on the National Council, with 37% of members voting in the race between Paul Krassar and Grace Li Na Chong



- won by Krassar.

Krassar (28%) and Chong (23%) were elected as Branch Vice Presidents alongside Marylin Tsitonakis (19%), with 311 of 886 members casting a ballot (35%).

Chong and Tsitonakis were elected as Alternative National Councillors for the Victorian Branch.

With one-in-three eligible voters from South Australia casting their ballot in the Branch election, Paul Simmons (30%), Gregory Scarlett (29%) and Marc Apolloni (27%) were appointed as Vice Presidents.

Scarlett took the Branch's National Council position, claiming 49% of the vote, with Rabia Kajani (36%) and Matthew Gillespie (32%)

winning the right to be the State's two Alternative National Councillors.

The incoming Guild National Council will feature: Simon Blacker (ACT); Peter Hatwell (NT); David Heffernan, Judith Plunkett and Adele Tahan (NSW); Trent Twomey and Chris Owen (Qld); Nick Panayiaris and Gregory Scarlett (SA); Helen O'Byrne and John Dowling (Tas); Anthony Tassone and Paul Krassar (Vic); and Andrew Ngeow and Natalie Willis (WA).

The election process for the National President will begin on 25 Feb, with a result due by either 18 Mar or 28 Apr depending on the number of nominations made.

COVAX ad rules

PHARMACISTS and other approved immunisers are being urged to use Australian Government produced materials to promote COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX).

The Therapeutic Goods Administration has issued rules for promoting COVAX, stating that advertisers must not use self-developed advertising about immunisations.

Win an Evolt 360 package

This week Pharmacy Daily & Evolt are giving away an Evolt 360 Body Composition package valued at \$2500 - a high tech body composition platform that is proven to increase profitability, drive foot traffic, whilst engaging with the local community and establishing brand loyalty. To learn more click [HERE](#). Click [HERE](#) to enter & to see last weeks winner.



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