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## Let's get the jabs done

**OFFERS** from community pharmacists to join the COVID-19 vaccination (COVAX) rollout campaign must not be wasted, Victorian Parliamentary Secretary for Medical Research, Frank McGuire, believes.

Speaking in the Legislative Assembly yesterday, the Labor MP called on the Federal Government to "supercharge" its vaccination rollout, and set a deadline for having 70% of Australians immunised.

He told the Assembly that efforts to administer COVAX were "months behind schedule" and called on the Morrison Government to fast-track the distribution of more than eight million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine produced by CSL in Melbourne into the arms of vulnerable patients.

"Victorian GPs say they can double their number of vaccinations, and pharmacists are pleading to help deliver jabs in arms," he said.

"These offers must be seized, not squandered.

"The Australian Government knew winter was coming but maintained there was no race for vaccines.

"The race is to save lives and

livelihoods by delivering vaccines with the utmost urgency.

"Victoria has the most effective distribution result, and vaccines in arms is our way out of lockdowns and the pandemic.

"Delivery must be supercharged so another golden opportunity is not missed.

"Let us get the jabs done."

While McGuire urged the Federal Government not to pass-up the opportunity to get pharmacist immunisers on board, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, has previously noted that the decision to approve community pharmacies to administer COVAX shots, "sits firmly with the State Premiers" (PD 26 May).

Twomey added that the Premiers would be "personally responsible" for health outcomes and economic damage caused by lockdowns should they not approve community pharmacies to deliver COVAX shots.

### Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today features three pages of news and a full page from **Wizard**.



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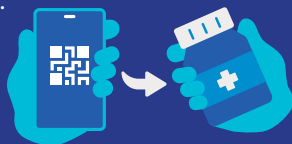
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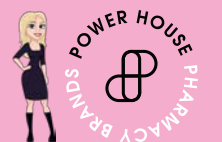
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## Pharmacists key to COVAX pace

**HOSPITAL** pharmacists and technicians are playing a central role in accelerating the delivery of COVID-19 vaccinations (COVAX).

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) noted pharmacists in State and Territory run clinics have been crucial to speeding up the pace of the vaccination campaign.

SHPA CEO, Kristin Michaels, said it took 90 days for the state-run clinics to immunise one million people, however "the second million has taken just 27 days".



## Pharmacies need local support: Guild

**PHARMACIES** across the country have remained open throughout COVID-19 lockdowns to ensure patients retained access to critical medicines, but now they need their communities' support, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, says.

Speaking at an event to mark a 12-month extension of the Go Local First campaign, Twomey, called on Australians to support pharmacies and other small businesses.

"Australia's community pharmacy sector is unique in that it's composed almost entirely of small businesses," he said.

"Most pharmacies are owned and operated by locals.

"Our community pharmacists have been on the frontlines throughout the pandemic, making sure their locals are safe and able to access the medical care they needed.

"But right now, they are still doing it tough, so we should be supporting them now more than



ever or we risk them closing doors.

"I would encourage all Australians to back this campaign and go local first next time you're looking to buy something or need some advice."

The extension of the campaign, which was initially launched in Jul 2020, will build on its early success in encouraging shoppers to support local small businesses when purchasing products and services.

Research commissioned by the Council of Small Business

Organisations of Australia (COSBOA) found Australians have increased their spending at small local businesses since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, COSBOA Interim CEO, Alexi Boyd, said that despite the positive findings small business "still need local communities to stand by them and support them in job creation as we emerge from Australia's first recession in three decades".

## PATY Award nominations closing soon

**NOMINATIONS** for the 2021 Pharmacy Guild of Australia/Maxigesic Pharmacy Assistant of the Year (PATY) Award will close on 02 Jul.

The annual competition recognises and celebrates the "best of the best" in community pharmacy, identifying outstanding pharmacy assistants' skills, knowledge, leadership and customer service.

Finalists will be selected to represent each state at the Pharmacy Assistant National Conference (PA2021) in Brisbane in Oct, when the winner will be named after a final round of face-to-face judging.

The winner will receive a cash prize of \$5,000, a customised training package and travel to PA2022 and APP2022.

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## GuildLink COVAX upgrade coming

**GUILDLink** is set to roll out an upgrade of its integration between the GuildCare NG platform and the Australian Immunisation Record (AIR) to alleviate the need to log into AIR and Health Professional Online Services (HPOS) separately, when administering COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX).

The updated platform has gone live for the pharmacies in regional and rural Queensland that have been given the green-light to provide COVAX, with the service expected to be extended to all GuildLink customers once they are given State Government approval to join the immunisation campaign.

GuildLink CEO, Arun Sharma, confirmed the company's platform was used by Foote Boonah Pharmacy to record the administration of Australia's first COVID-19 vaccine in a community pharmacy on Mon (PD 07 Jun).

"We are proud to have the first COVID-19 vaccine administered in pharmacy recorded through GuildCare NG," he said.

"Our investment in the AIR integration upgrade and COVID-19

vaccine module is testament to our commitment to Australian community pharmacies.

"Our team is ready, listening and looking forward to the national rollout."

**MEANWHILE**, Queensland's Assistant Minister for Health and Regional Health, Julieanne Gilbert, showed her support for the rollout of COVAX through community pharmacies, receiving her first dose of the AstraZeneca COVAX at Discount Drug Store Sarina, about 40km south of Mackay, yesterday.

"I want to encourage everyone to take up the opportunity to get the COVID-19 vaccination when it's offered to them," she said.

"As a regional Queenslander myself, I am really pleased that the Palaszczuk Queensland Government was the first State Government to utilise the network of community pharmacies to ensure equitable access to the vaccine in the regions.

"I want to thank all of the people who have already taken up the opportunity to get their vaccine.

"I also want to thank all of



the hardworking health staff, including our regional community pharmacists who are working tirelessly to keep regional communities safe."

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland Branch Acting President, Chris Owen, described the COVAX rollout as "the most critical health initiative in our generation".

"The Guild looks forward to working with both Federal and State Governments to quickly increase the number of community pharmacies involved in the COVAX rollout to improve patient accessibility," he said.

**Pictured**, Gilbert with Discount Drug Store Sarina pharmacist immuniser, Renee Hall.



## Dispensary Corner

**HEALTH** authorities in Ireland are alarmed at the soaring quantities of counterfeit and illegally sourced medications being seized coming into the country.

The Emerald Isle's Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) reported 1.6 million dosage units of dodgy medicines were nabbed by customs officials in 2020, up 58% compared to seizures the previous year.

While sedatives medications accounted for the largest number of units seized (583,805), "treatments" for erectile dysfunction saw the biggest increase, up 70% to 484,846 doses - suggesting the nation's COVID-19-induced lockdown may have been harder for some than others.

HPRA CEO, Dr Lorraine Nolan, said the rising quantities of illegal medications streaming into the country was "seriously concerning".

"While in many cases those who buy online at best may be simply wasting their money on falsified (including counterfeit) products, at worst, they may be taking very serious health risks," she said.



## Win thanks to Crampeze!

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## Pharmacist jailed

**WISCONSIN** pharmacist, Steven Brandenburg, will spend three years behind bars and another 36 months of supervised release after that, for deliberately destroying more than 500 doses of Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine.

Brandenburg had been facing up to 20 years' jail time after pleading guilty to two counts of attempting to tamper with consumer products with reckless disregard (PD 27 Jan).

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