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Pharmacists to miss out on bonus

OUTSOURCING of pharmacy services in NSW's public hospitals means hospital pharmacists are unlikely to receive the State Government's \$3,000 "thank you" bonus for NSW Health workers, Professional Pharmacists Australia CEO, Jill McCabe, believes.

McCabe told **Pharmacy Daily** that few if any pharmacists across NSW would be eligible for the bonus, or the 3% pay rise for the State's public sector workforce, with private contractors operating the majority of hospital pharmacies.

She added that while the \$3,000 bonus was a welcome top-up for frontline workers who are eligible to receive it, pharmacists deserved greater recognition in the form of substantial pay increases, regardless of what setting they work in.

"Overall, a relatively modest one-off bonus payment isn't adequate recognition or reward for the skills and expertise that pharmacists provide each and every day in protecting our public health,"

McCabe said.

"Australia's pharmacists remain the lowest paid professionals in Australia and the pharmacy sector requires comprehensive reform to deliver the remuneration and employment conditions our pharmacists deserve."

"That's why Professionals Australia will continue to pursue better wages for pharmacy graduates and a classification and wage structure for pharmacists which provides higher levels of remuneration and career progression opportunities for pharmacists throughout their careers."

"Enterprise bargaining agreements would also enable pharmacists to have a real say in their wages and conditions."

"With spiralling inflation and additional pressure on the pharmacists, it's critical that the pharmacy sector deliver a much-needed pay increase to attract and maintain quality pharmacists."

"If our sector is to retain



the skilled and experienced pharmacists our community requires, pharmacy employers must provide employee pharmacists with healthy and safe workplaces, reasonable workloads and decent pay and conditions."

Meanwhile the Public Sector Union has noted that the 3% pay increase for the State's employees falls below inflation and will leave many workers out-of-pocket going forward.

Today's issue of **PD**

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news.

Nominations for PATY close soon

PHARMACY workers have three weeks to nominate a colleague for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia/Maxigesic 2022 Pharmacy Assistant of the Year (PATY) Award, with the deadline for third party nominations 01 Jul.

Guild National President, Trent Twomey, urged pharmacy owners to nominate a pharmacy assistant "to recognise their dedication to work, commitment to patients and their integral role in the community pharmacy team".

The winner will be named at the 2022 Pharmacy Assistant National Conference in Oct.

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Get flu vaccinated

AUSTRALIA'S Acting Chief Medical Officer, Dr Sonya Bennett, is urging all Australians to get an influenza vaccine this year.

"This year, for the first time, Australia will be managing COVID-19 and an influenza season," she said.

"As we move into the winter 2022 season it is increasingly important that people protect themselves from both COVID-19 and influenza."



Profession shows resilience in crisis

COMMUNITY pharmacists displayed high levels of resilience responding to rapidly changing regulations during the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers believe.

A cross-sectional investigation of the impact of COVID-19 on community pharmacy in Western Australia, published in *Exploratory Research in Clinical and Social Pharmacy*, found that regulatory and legislative changes had caused some level of fragmentation in work pattern but little or no change in staffing or rostering schedules.

The authors from Curtin University and the University of Western Australia reported that while WA was less affected by COVID-19, "being at the end of supply chains was affected in this way more than some other states".

"COVID-19's impact caused an increased pharmacist workload, a perceived lack of support from government regulatory bodies, and

pronounced medicine and medical resource shortages requiring medicine substitutions," they said.

"COVID-19 did not seem to induce alterations in staffing structure, or trading hours and team rostering, however it yielded conflicting reports concerning rostering schedules.

"Despite a level of fragmentation due to a general lack of clear guidance from government regulatory bodies, WA community pharmacies were generally able to adapt to COVID-19-related changes.

"Amidst COVID-19, pharmacists showed generally high levels of resilience and confidence in dealing with pandemic/emergency situations."

While pharmacists across the State expressed confidence in their abilities to cope with future pandemics, they noted "there was a general 'silence' from the government surrounding changes;



there was conflicting information between federal and state Ministers".

Pharmacists also said that better exemption and compensation systems were needed, that pharmacy owners and other professions were more supported than pharmacy staff who were overworked and received no benefits therefore leading to overwork for little remuneration.

Watch out for signs of exhaustion: PSS

PHARMACISTS are being urged to keep an eye out for signs of mental exhaustion, by the Pharmacists' Support Service (PSS).

The peer-to-peer service noted that pharmacists should be aware that chronic stress, declining motivation, anxiety, cynicism and doubt can be indicators that they may be mentally exhausted.

"It's important to acknowledge the signs so you can give yourself what you need to recover," the



PSS said in a social media post.

"If this is you, call for support and a chat on 1300 244 910, 8am-11pm AEDT everyday."

Woman fined for abusing pharmacist

A SCOTTISH woman, Nicola Miller, has been fined £200 after racially abusing a locum pharmacist.

The 42-year-old, had a prescription for morphine to treat severe pain caused by spinal problems, called the Burnfoot Pharmacy in Hawick to arrange for her medicines to be collected by her brother-in-law.

However, the pharmacist informed her that he would need to see a letter before dispensing the medicine, which sparked an

angry tirade.

A short time later Miller arrived at the pharmacy, where she shouted and swore at the pharmacist, whom she said had treated her like a "junkie".

Miller's lawyer, Mat Patrick, told a court hearing that she had comments by the pharmacies about her supply of medication had made her feel like he was accusing her of being a drug user.

Miller was fined £200 and ordered to pay £100 compensation to the pharmacist.

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Bianco L et al., *J Am Geriatr Soc* 2012; 60:1180-1.

Guild opens nominations for PotY '23

NOMINATIONS for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's 2023 Pharmacy of the Year (PotY) Awards are now open.

For the second time members of the public will be invited to nominate their favourite pharmacy, following the success of last year's process, which resulted in a record number of nominations.

Guild National President, Trent Twomey, noted that the awards provide a benchmark for excellence in the community pharmacy sector.

"These awards recognise the very best in the community pharmacy profession as it continues to innovate and develop new ways of helping to improve the health outcomes of the patients community pharmacies serve," he said.

"Everyone should nominate their favourite community pharmacy so they are in the running for this coveted award."

Nominations can be made in three categories: Excellence in Business Management, Excellence in Community Engagement, and Excellence in Professional Innovation.

The awards are sponsored by Care Pharmaceuticals whose General Manager, Jonathan Biddle, said his company continued to be proud of its involvement in an event which celebrated excellence in the profession.

"The opening up of public nominations has been a great initiative and means we are hearing about more and more brilliant pharmacies," he said.

"Through this very worthwhile event we at Care Pharmaceuticals are proud to be able to give back to that sector which is so much a part of our everyday business.

"It highlights some of the amazing things community pharmacies are doing every day and enables them



to be celebrated nationally."

Coolman Court Pharmacy proprietor, Brad Butt, who took home the 2022 PotY urged pharmacy teams to participate in the awards.

"I would encourage you to get the word out to all of your patients to nominate you because it's not about the \$5,000 prize, it's not about the trophies, it's not about the flights and accommodation – let me tell you, it's about your community and the sense of ownership they get when you are nominated for an award like this is remarkable," he said.

Novavax gets FDA backing

AN INDEPENDENT advisory body to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommended that the regulator grant an Emergency Use Exemption for Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine for people aged 18 years and older.

The move comes more than six months after the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and the European Medicines Agency gave the green light for the vaccine to be used in Australia and the EU (PD 20 Jan).



Police seek to sniff out pharmacy thief

CANADIAN police are on the hunt for a bandit who stole 20 bottles of perfume valued at more than \$1,500 during a robbery at a pharmacy last week.

Incredibly the raid, which occurred last Wed, was not the only incident at the pharmacy in Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia, which saw more than \$16,000-worth of fragrances stolen over the course of seven days.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are continuing to



investigate the string of robberies, and have called on potential witnesses to come forward to assist.

Time to eliminate viral hepatitis: WHO

HAVING failed to meet targets to reduce the incidence of hepatitis B in children under five years, the World Health Organization (WHO) is urging countries to step up to the challenge of eliminating viral hepatitis by 2030.

Addressing the World Hepatitis Summit yesterday, WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, noted that hepatitis was "one of the most devastating diseases

on earth, but it's also one of the more preventable and treatable".

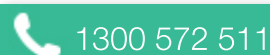
"We call on all countries to commit to realising the dream of eliminating viral hepatitis by 2030, as part of a broader commitment to universal health coverage based on strong primary health care," he said.

Hepatitis Australia noted that Australia is currently reviewing its national hepatitis B and C strategies.



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Dispensary Corner

ONCE again rugby league is fuelling tension within the community pharmacy sector, as NSW prepares to host Queensland in tonight's State of Origin clash.

Marking the start of the three-match series, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, kicked off the annual mate versus mate rivalry with a Facebook post this morning simply saying, "good morning everyone (except the NSW Blues)".

The sentiment was backed up by the Queensland Deputy Premier, who commented that he "couldn't have said it better".

Defending his home State, Guild NSW Branch President, David Heffernan, joined the thread wishing the "beautiful NSW people" a good morning, and posting a photo of Guild leaders at a meeting, including Twomey sporting a light blue shirt - although it is not clear if the photo was taken today.

The Guild President's wardrobe *faux pas* was quickly noted by former Australian College of Pharmacy President, Georgina Twomey.

Tonight's clash will kick off at 8.10pm (AEST) for those wanting to ensure they miss the pre-match hype.



Pharmacies offered chance to win \$2k

ARROTEX Pharmaceuticals' Chemists' Own brand of over-the-counter (OTC) products is offering pharmacies the chance to win a \$2,000 cash card, as part of its latest in-store promotion.

As part of the Make It Your Own campaign, participating pharmacies can access point of sale (POS) materials featuring unique QR codes on each item.

To go in the draw for one of 10 \$2,000 cash cards, participating pharmacies need to create a fun and eye-catching display with their POS materials, snap some photos and upload them via the QR code, Chemists' Own Brand Manager, Jessica Velevska said.

The 10 most impressive and creative POS displays will each earn a \$2,000 cash card for their staff to enjoy.

"Our 'Make It Your Own' competition gives pharmacies the chance to get creative and have some fun, and potentially win \$2,000 in the process, which they can enjoy with their team however they choose," she said.

"We want to reward pharmacies for the effort they put into their displays, and for supporting Australian brands like Chemists' Own."

Customers can go in the draw to win a new Toyota Yaris Cross GX by simply scanning the QR code and entering their details in-store.

"Pharmacies have always played such a vital role in our local communities," Velevska said.

"The last two years have really served to highlight just how much we rely on our local pharmacists and pharmacy workers to look after our



health and wellbeing in tough times.

"We hope the competition can provide them with some enjoyment and we are very excited to see each participating pharmacy's creation."

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