

## Informing

### Health translations on line

A new resource has been developed for those needing quality translation health information. The Health Translations Online Directory is an easy to use search-based site, with links to over 9,000 multilingual Australian-produced resources and currently offering translations in 59 community languages.

Netlink: [www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au](http://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au)

### Overdoses and the law

Overdoses, the law, safer injecting is a free wallet-sized publication by Victoria Legal Aid. It covers legal and health issues associated with intravenous drug use including police powers, drug laws, syringes and the law, syringe disposal and CPR information. You can order copies by phoning Chris Shelley on (03) 9269 0223.

### Prescription Shopping

The Health Insurance Commission has produced a suite of brochures and posters for pharmacists and consumers about the inherent dangers of prescription shopping, as well as the wastage involved in having more medicines than people need for their health. Additional copies of the publications can be ordered through [www.hic.gov.au](http://www.hic.gov.au)

### Survey results

The results of one of the most comprehensive pharmacy surveys are now out. The 2002 survey by researcher Con Berbatis provides fascinating reading for any pharmacist, says PSA (Vic) CEO John Illott, because of the overview it gives about the breadth and depth of practical services offered by pharmacists.

According to the national survey, about 40 per cent of Australia's pharmacies declined dispensing prescription drugs for at least one patient weekly because of inappropriate drug, dose or suspected adverse reaction. Pharmacies referred an estimated 4.19 million clients each year to GPs and a further 1.77 million to other health workers; and an estimated total of 860,000 clients a year were suspected of misuse of dependence-producing OTC medications, with 630,000 being refused supply. "The overall report gives a very good snapshot of how pharmacy is practised in Australia, and is providing PSA (Vic) with useful information that will help in the development of new member programs," said Mr Illott.

Netlink: <http://www.curtin.edu.au/curtin/dept/pharmacy/survey/index.html>

### Crucial study on S2/S3

Watch out for survey forms from the Universities of Sydney and Queensland asking you for information to measure the added benefits and value that pharmacists and pharmacy assistants provide when dealing with non-prescription medicines.

Pharmacists and pharmacy staff are asked to record any significant interventions made during the sale (or non-sale) of Pharmacist Only (S3) and Pharmacy (S2) medicines, over a two-week period.

All community pharmacists in Australia are being asked to participate. The first batch of data has been collected already but a second set is about to be dispatched in early 2004.

The survey is being conducted to assist with the current debate on whether Pharmacist Only and Pharmacy medicines should stay exclusively in pharmacies or whether the system should change. This study has the support of PSA. Enquiries should be made to Catherine Raffaele on (02) 9036 9490.

### Whom to contact about what?

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### Victorian Councillors - Serving You

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Pharmaceutical Society of Australia  
(Victorian Branch)

# Society News

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Informing



Pharmaceutical Society of Australia  
(Victorian Branch)

## the View



Welcome to another issue of *Society News*, my first as President of PSA (Vic). I am honoured to be President of our Society at such an important time in its history in Victoria. I take over the reins from Valda Comber who

has worked tirelessly to ensure that the role of pharmacists is better understood and appreciated by other health professionals, the community and the Government. She has played a crucial part in fostering an enhanced reputation for pharmacy as well as promoting the valuable part played by PSA in practice delivery. Thank you Valda.

These two years have seen much change within PSA (Vic) itself. Pressure to change has come from outside and within our Society. From outside, the review of the Pharmacists Act has taken up, and will continue to take up, an enormous amount of Council and staff time. Now on the agenda for the autumn session of Parliament, PSA (Vic) will continue working to ensure a successful outcome for us all.

At stake is our traditional role as the medicine experts as the chain stores continue their push to envelop pharmacy. Our argument is that price is only one aspect of pharmacy, and not the most important. More vital than anything else is the value that we bring to the health of every Australian: our knowledge of medicines that is relied upon by the community and other health professionals as well as the custodial role we play in ensuring medicines are taken safely and are not misused, for legal or illicit purposes.

We shall also work to ensure that Pharmacists Act incorporates the new role that we are carving out for community pharmacy – the expansion into clinical pharmacy practice through the delivery of home medication reviews.

What has been happening externally has precipitated much needed change within PSA. This change affects how we operate and what we offer you in a bid to cement pharmacy into Australia's health system.

This issue of *Society News* explores this change, looking especially at the future of education and professional development within PSA (Vic). As you will read, the changes promise a more invigorated approach to pharmacy practice in Victoria, and the opportunity to give our young pharmacists more rewarding careers.

**Joe Demarte,**  
President

# WELCOME

### Want more info?

For more information about the articles included in this issue of *Society News* or if you want to send a letter to the editor or make a comment, please contact PSA (Vic) on (03) 9389 4000 or [psa@psavic.com.au](mailto:psa@psavic.com.au). Letters can also be sent to 381 Royal Parade, Parkville, Vic. 3052

## Increasing membership reflects new direction



It is pleasing to report that after several years in decline, PSA (Vic)'s membership is increasing once again. At the end of October, membership by registered pharmacists (i.e. excluding students) was 2,397 which is 3.3% higher than the same time in 2002 and 2.4% higher than October 2001. This is pleasing news and is an indication that the direction that we have taken and the services that we offer are being

favourably viewed by the profession. Attendances at the monthly lecture at the Victorian College of Pharmacy have also increased, with attendance at almost every lecture since April exceeding that of the corresponding month last year.

Another pleasing aspect of the membership is the huge growth in student membership. These figures are not included in the 2,397 above, but student membership of PSA (Vic) has grown by 142% over the last three years to 469 at the end of October.

We are acutely aware of the need to build a relationship between students and young pharmacists and their professional body so that we can begin to develop the leaders of tomorrow.

Probably our biggest member service success this calendar year has been the introduction of the Business & Careers Club. Launched in July in partnership with Medici Capital, our first workshop was held in August with the second in November. The response from young pharmacists in particular has been overwhelming and their participation and feedback has given us many ideas for workshops and seminars in 2004.

However the introduction of this service has not been without its critics. The most common criticism has been that PSA (Vic) should not be offering business-related services and that these should be left for other organisations in the profession.

My response is that continuing professional development is far more than clinical education and the introduction of practice standards. It's about learning to be a better professional in all aspects, whether it be in clinical practice, career selection or learning to be a better manager.

We at PSA (Vic) believe that we have a very important role to play not only in maintaining the standards of the pharmacy profession, but in developing the workforce itself. We are introducing a wide-ranging strategy that includes a broad education agenda as well as improving the technological capacity of the workforce and keeping more pharmacists in the profession. Quite obviously, we cannot achieve all this alone. So we will be looking to our colleagues within other professional organisations to assist.

In 2004 you will see for the first time, two pre-registration training programs. The Victorian College of Pharmacy, Monash University has decided to introduce a program that will be part of a broader Graduate Certificate in Pharmacy Practice. We began discussions in May this year with a view to forming a partnership with the VCP to offer a single program. However in September we decided that it would be more beneficial to the profession if we continued to offer our own program.

There will also be several improvements that will benefit both pre-registrants and small group tutors. Tutors will be offered formal training in management of small groups. This will be a recognised training program under the Australian Quality Training Framework and will provide tutors with more skills that will enable them to provide even better support for their pre-registrant group members.

We are looking forward to 2004. Make sure you attend the first monthly lecture of the year, the Neil Naismith Lecture on 3rd February. We will be making a special presentation on our 2004-2006 program.

**John Ilott,**  
CEO

## News News News News from PSA

### New office bearers for PSA (Vic)

Council of PSA (Vic) has elected Joe Demarte as President. Russ Grosvenor is Vice President, John Jackson is Treasurer and James Dwyer remains Fourth Executive Member.

### Life member honoured

Pharmacist Peter Ball has been made a life member of PSA. Peter has lived and breathed pharmacy all his life. He served his apprenticeship with William Wishart at Bull & Owen's in Geelong after graduating from the Victorian College of Pharmacy in 1956. He and his wife, Jeanette, and her father Campbell Fewtrell owned and managed the Geelong West pharmacy business before selling it in 1998, after 70 years in the one family.

Peter said that pharmacy has changed much in his career but most notably is how it is taught. "I realised in the mid 1980s that the pharmacy course had not prepared us to handle and understand the new drugs then appearing, such as the early beta blockers and all their side effects. My training concentrated mainly on extemporaneous prescriptions."

To keep ahead of the changes, Peter enrolled at Deakin University and graduated with a Science degree in Biochemistry. Peter retains contact with pharmacy through casual locum work as well as attending CPE courses organised by PSA (Vic). He is a member of the local Rotary Club and serves on the Research & Ethics Committee for Barwon Health.

### Welcome to new members

PSA (Vic) is delighted to welcome aboard: Janet Chan, Ngoc-Minh, Julie Huynh, Keri Jones, Lee Kong, Harmion Levi, Hui Liu, Dina Maiiale, Tanya McKay, Melanie McLeod, John Presutto, Bruce Rowe, Irina Rigoli, Ranu Tamrakar, and Ngan-Ha Truong.



### Season's greetings

We wish you Season's Greetings and a happy and prosperous 2004.

### Medicine seminar in Geelong

Many thanks to PSA (Vic) Councillor Brian Grogan who stood in the firing line of many questions about a variety of medicines at a recent PSA (Vic) and Pharmacy Board of Victoria seminar in Geelong.

The seminar was part of the ongoing Don't Go 'Til You Know campaign. It was attended by around 50 consumers and received strong media coverage from the local Geelong papers and radio stations. PSA (Vic) sponsored the event.



Left to right: Pharmacy Board of Victoria Chairperson Barry Reed, Barwon Health's Director of Pharmacy Greg Weeks, Victorian Health Services Commissioner, Beth Wilson, Pharmacy Board of Victoria's Registrar, Steve Marty and PSA (Vic) Councillor, Brian Grogan.

### Submissions, media coverage

PSA (Vic) has recently been commenting on a number of topical issues. It has submitted an overview of the role and actions of pharmacy and pseudoephedrine to the Victorian Government's committee investigating Party and Street Drugs. The submission highlighted the part that PSA (Vic) played in drawing up practice guidelines and encouraging the establishment of a working group now convened by the Department of Human Services and the Victoria Police. Media has sought comment from PSA (Vic) on drugs and driving and ibuprofen.

### Valda bows out

Valda Comber was showered with flowers at the recent PSA (Vic) annual general meeting. It was her last meeting as PSA (Vic) President.

PSA (Vic) also farewelled Maria Stogiannis from Council and thanked her for the crucial role she had played in revitalising the Young Pharmacists' Group.



# An invitation to have your say about your career and professional development

Over the past months, PSA (Vic) education staff have been busy developing a specialised career-focused program that aims to meet the needs of all pharmacists in Victoria, regardless of where they live and work, and the stages of their careers.

**PSA Pathways**, as this strategic workforce development plan is known, was adopted at the October PSA (Vic) Council meeting. The approval followed an extensive phase of phone and face-to-face consultation with many members. Now the plan moves on to the implementation phase.

PSA (Vic) is inviting all members to have their say and to provide input about the content and ways that this comprehensive and flexible program can be delivered across Victoria.

## Why do we need a specialised program?

Pharmacy is not a 'one size fits all' profession.

Pharmacists work in many different environments, and in ways that were not thought of in years past. Pharmacists run small businesses, manage staff and practices in large and small organisations, they deal with information technology. This is all on top of the need to keep current with the introduction of new medicines, therapies and treatments.

The career of a pharmacist begins before graduating, moves through to pre-registration and into the early experiences as a young pharmacist. It can take in general or specialised pharmacy practice, it may include a period of locum work, before moving into semi-retirement and retirement phases.

When pharmacy is considered in this light, it is vital that the PSA (Vic) considers the professional development needs of all PSA members, whatever stages they are at. Clearly, professionals must strive to maintain their competence to practise. Moreover, given that all pharmacists follow a Code of Ethics that sets out the behaviours expected of caring, competent professionals, it is vital that the PSA (Vic) as the pharmacy organisation responsible for promoting professional practice, PSA (Vic) supports practitioners in their efforts to abide by the Code.

**PSA Pathways** is about making sure that PSA (Vic) fortifies the considerable strengths of members in order to help them in the industry today and in the near future. It is about helping the overall pharmacy workforce to develop, and to be in control of emerging trends and issues. It is about building the capacity of the workforce to meet clinical, business, and technology challenges.

## What is the PSA Pathways program?

The **PSA Pathways** program is a five-year plan that is personalised for each PSA member. It will take into account the stage at which any one pharmacist is in his or her career and wherever he or she lives and works. It will allow for special interests and include areas that are important for pharmacists not only to manage medicines but also to develop their professional careers, including communication, critical thinking and problem solving, judgement and decision-making and leadership.

Essentially the **PSA Pathways** includes four learning streams: clinical, business, technology and capacity building.

**Clinical** is very much about what has happened to date within PSA (Vic) but with a greater range of offerings. From 2004 onwards we will run Clinical CPE in blocks of three months. We will focus on key topics that can be run as a road show across Victoria to ensure that all pharmacists, wherever they are based, receive the same information as their peers. These road shows will embrace small group meetings, lectures as well as new ways of learning.

The first three topics for February through to April which have been selected by pharmacists are:

- Arthritis, which will be delivered in conjunction with the Arthritis Foundation.
- Vision, delivered in conjunction with the new government program Vision 2020.
- Diversion of legal drugs and security, delivered in conjunction with the Victoria Police and the Pharmacy Board of Victoria.

These topics will be delivered across Victoria. Over and above the road

shows, we will add more one-off topics that will be delivered in a range of places according to member interest. The very successful Super Sundays will continue. We will also be developing more partnerships with other organisations who can deliver quality programs.

**Technology** includes critical issues in e-Health, e-Business and customised information technology programs.

**Business** will be designed to ensure all possible gaps are covered in a pharmacist's career and work needs. We will build on the very popular Business & Careers Club that has already achieved a momentum of its own especially among younger pharmacists.

**Capacity Building** is an odd name but has a vital role in making a workforce development plan work. This will embrace training for members in how to train small groups, mentoring, facilitation and knowledge management.

## A supported plan!

**PSA Pathways** is the way to all our futures. It has the unconditional support of PSA (Vic) Council and many other supporters of pharmacy education in the state. It needs your input NOW and in the future to make it happen in a way that will benefit you, PSA and your patients.

We invite you to do two very important things for us.

1. You will have recently received a survey that we ask you to fill in and return to allow us to assess the additional skills you need to progress your professional development in business. This will assist us in our current discussions with governments in our applications for funding assistance.
2. There are a number of discussion points outlined here. We ask you to take a moment to think about each of them. Bringing your knowledge and thoughts into this process will benefit all pharmacists now and over the next 5 years. If you want to make further points, we urge you to do so.

## Discussion questions

- From a pharmacy perspective, what are the trends (community, health topics, technology etc) that pharmacists will need to face in the next five years?
- What are the challenges, difficulties and issues facing pharmacists that need to be addressed by education programs in the next year and in the next 2 to 3 years?
- What would need to change to achieve closer partnerships with other organisations who also provide education to pharmacists?
- How can PSA (Vic) meet the education needs of pharmacists in rural locations?
- What technology skills do pharmacists need to do their work now and over the next three years?
- Could new learning technologies, such as the Internet, chat rooms, bulletin boards, video-conferencing over computers, SMS (mobile phones) help pharmacists connect with each other more and help rural pharmacists receive more education opportunities?

To respond to any of these discussion questions or to comment about how you see PSA Pathways working for you, please email Margaret Aspin at [margaret.aspin@psavic.com.au](mailto:margaret.aspin@psavic.com.au) by 14 January.

“ PSA Pathways is about making considerable strengths of its members maintain the skills demanded in the

sure that PSA (Vic) fortifies the in order to help them acquire and industry today and in the near future. ”

## Activoice

### Paul Gysslink

PSA (Vic) Councillor



Paul Gysslink

Early in my pharmacy career, I made a deliberate choice: not to own a pharmacy. I wanted to experience the best of what pharmacy has to offer by gaining experience in different environments in which pharmacy is practised, such as community, hospital, government and the pharmaceutical industry. It was a bold decision then, but one which I continue to be pleased with. I think it is the way that many pharmacists will practise in the future, given the changing face and nature of pharmacy.

I am currently employed in community and private hospital practice. I teach units in the Certificate III course for hospital pharmacy technicians at Victoria University. I am a committee member of the Pharmacists' Division of APESMA and a qualified Quality Care Pharmacy Program assessor.

Standing for PSA (Vic) Council is something that I have thought about for some time. Now on Council, I shall be doing my best to assist the Society interact more meaningfully with its members.

One of the platforms that I stood on during the election was the need for transparency. Councillors have to be accountable for the decisions they make.

From an outsider's perspective, PSA (Vic) has been going through enormous change for many different reasons. But understanding why change has been occurring, why decisions have been taken and what the issues are has been

hard for many interested PSA members. There has been no central place to go to find answers to these questions. The rumour mill has been rife.

Other questions now being debated include: Are enough safeguards being put in place regarding the transfer of power from PSA State Councils to the PSA National Council? Why isn't PSA doing more lobbying off its own bat on important political issues?

No doubt these very hard questions will be subjected to great debate within Council. The problem is, members are not in the know.

As a champion of new technology, I shall be urging PSA (Vic) to use the website and email as a more regular conduit of information about issues that affect us all, rather than merely using technology to alert us to forthcoming seminars. I would like to see, for instance, all minutes from the various committee meetings and Council posted onto the website and a chat room established to encourage feedback and comment.

As a new councillor, I believe that all members have the right to ask questions and a duty not to rely on the rumour mill. Your insights can only help PSA move ahead in what is obviously a very important time for pharmacy.

We are a membership organisation and we need to know what members are thinking and doing about issues, such as CMI, S2s and S3s, workforce issues and so on.

Communication, after all, is a two-way street.

## Business & Careers Club goes from strength to strength

The second successful Business & Careers night was held on Thursday 20 November. Around 100 pharmacists, pharmacy students and "experts" attended the event to hear about career and financial success.

Michelle Lynch, Chairperson of the Young Pharmacists Group, spoke on her career experiences and on her current role in management at Australian Unity Pharmacies. Ian Scholes then addressed the room and spoke on his role at the Drugs and Poisons Unit within the Department of Human Services before Frank Sirianni presented on the traps of pharmacy valuations.

We were really pleased to see such a cross section of members ranging from 1st year pharmacy students to established pharmacists with over 40 years experience. This is without doubt the club for all pharmacists that are looking for ways to further their career and financial prospects. The Business & Careers Club is not limited to qualified pharmacists. Students are really encouraged to join.

So call PSA now on 9389 4000 to join and make sure that you do not miss the next event.



Coffee break for pharmacist Darcy Brennan



Irvine Newton in full flow with students and Janet Lewin, Manager, Professional Development.



Frank Sirianni muses on the finer points of pharmacy with students

## Meet Janet Lewin

Manager, Professional Development



Janet Lewin has just joined PSA (Vic) as the new Manager, Professional Development. Her background is in organisational development through the delivery implementation of workplace learning and development.

Janet came to Australia two years ago due to her husband's work. Within three weeks, she was engaged by a Registered Training Organisation in Canberra where she has been until her relocation to Melbourne

late October 2003. Most of her work has involved implementing organisational learning and development plans for several medium to large organisations.

Before emigrating to Australia, Janet worked alongside the oil and gas industry to research, develop and implement a mandatory qualification through the delivery of behavioural based management training.

"I have been lucky enough to work across various industries and professions, British Wool Textiles, Local Government Management Board, Construction, Legal, The British Learning and Enterprise Council, Community and Education to mention a few," says Janet.

Janet was attracted to the position with PSA (Vic) for many reasons. "Most importantly, it provides me with the opportunity to learn about a new profession and to use my expertise to implement a relevant and flexible professional development plan for the duration of a pharmacist's career," she says.

Janet intends using the first few months of the position to get a feel for the profession and to find out what is needed by our members in order to explore how PSA can take professional development into the workplace, to transfer theory into practice.

"I will need to build relationships and partnerships to achieve this," she emphasises. That will include supporting the area coordinators and small group tutors more.

Quality too, is an important factor for any professional development program. This involves making sure that systems are in place to manage the business and communications aspects or a professional development program. As a consequence, she has started the rigorous accreditation process of PSA (Vic)'s becoming a Registered Training Organisation.

Janet is well aware that people may think, "But she is not a pharmacist how can she do all this for the profession?"

"There are enough pharmacists around here to advise me," she says.

"It will be my organisational skills, understanding how to get the most from people, my sense of humour, and expertise and experiences in learning and development, along with my ability to listen and work under pressure that will support me," she emphasises.

Janet is committed to her own learning and development and is currently doing her Masters (Professional Education Training.) Her areas of interest are "what makes a competent organisation" and "how organisations implement competency-based learning".

On a lighter note Janet is a mother of four girls and a dog. She wants to meet Steve Irwin and sheepishly admits to owning six talking Steve Irwin action figures and only wears a watch with Pluto on the face. But that's a story for another day.

### CPE Calendar in 2004 and you!

Pharmacy education in Victoria 2004 is going to look and feel very different. While PSA (Vic) has drawn up the first quarter's calendar with input from many pharmacists (for topics, see pages 4 and 5), we will be deciding the rest of the year's program in conjunction with you.

Janet Lewin has been out and about meeting PSA's area coordinators and pharmacists over the past month to find certain members' education and development needs.

PSA (Vic) will produce a calendar as soon as the complete program has been developed and dates have been confirmed.

This year, we will have an online calendar that allows us to be flexible, and place up-to-date information about the various programs in an easy-to-access format. It will be possible for fax stream reminders to be done the day before an event on request. CPE News will continue to be printed on a bi-monthly basis.

**Diary date – Tuesday 3 February 2003**

**Neil Naismith Lecture.**

**Victorian College of Pharmacy, Royal Parade, Parkville**

**7.30pm for 8pm.**

Come and hear directly about Pharmacy Education 2004 from Janet Lewin as well as the strategic direction of PSA across Australia from Kerry Deans PSA's national CEO. This lecture is all about matters that affect you and your profession.