



## The heroes of pharmacy

Our readers have nominated their heroes, and we've chosen 10 who represent the range and scope, and reality of pharmacy in 2023.

**I**t's been a very difficult, indeed, traumatic year for pharmacy. On the back of a once-in-a-century pandemic, myriad climate-related crises, constant medicines shortages, demands for pharmacists in all sectors to constantly do more and a shortage of pharmacists in some areas (among other issues), the community sector now faces a ground-shifting policy change in the form of 60-day dispensing.

Yet, despite these challenges and workload stress confronting pharmacists, there are many out there who are going above and beyond for their patients, their community and their colleagues. And most of them are doing it without wider recognition (nor are they seeking this).

We at the *AJP* feel their stories should be known to a wider audience—to inspire others, and to reassure them that pharmacy is much more than the news cycle. So, we asked our readers to nominate their heroes within pharmacy.

We've tried to ensure that our final list is a relatively accurate cross-section of current pharmacy practice, and that each of the chosen heroes reflect the thousands of their colleagues doing similar great work in a broadly similar area of pharmacy practice or support. Most aren't among the 'big names' of pharmacy, but a selection of grassroots, coalface pharmacists.

I would like to thank everyone who took the time and made the effort to send in thoughtful, meaningful and erudite nominations. You have highlighted to us (and hopefully to our readers) the work of some exceptional and excellent pharmacists.

These people, and many of their colleagues around Australia, represent the best tradition of pharmacy practice and healthcare, and we thank you all for the contributions you make to our nation's health and society.



Here are our heroes (in alphabetical order) with a selection of the comments from those who nominated them:

### Melinda Boss

Dr Melinda Boss is a community pharmacist and academic passionate about the expanding role pharmacists can play in providing professional services to bridge gaps in community healthcare. Her particular interest is in improving the breastfeeding experience for new families.

"She has done so much in a completely underserved and critical area of pharmacy practice—and has made a massive impact locally and internationally. She's definitely expanding scope for us all."

"Melinda is showing that with appropriate education pharmacists, as one of the most accessible health professionals, can fill this gap in care. As a credentialled Australian course does not exist, Melinda obtained a PhD in lactation and now provides one-on-one breastfeeding consultations from the private consulting rooms at Pharmacy 777 Mt Hawthorn. In response to requests from pregnant women in the community, she also provides one-on-one breastfeeding education and personalised breastfeeding risk factor screens during pregnancy."

"Melinda works to raise the profile and influence of the pharmacy profession in Australia and internationally through her work with the broader academic and medical community. She has developed, and delivers, online postgraduate breastfeeding short courses for the University of Western Australia. These are attended by GP obstetricians, lactation consultants, dietitians, child health nurses, midwives, and pharmacists from across Australia."



### Community and Pharmacy Support Group (CAPS)

There were a number of nominations for the CAPS group, and its leaders/public faces, for their role in spearheading the pharmacy response to 60-day dispensing, and organising protests and other actions to bring the profession together and rally its efforts to highlight the impact of the policy.

"I believe the three heroes should be the CAPS team members: Emil Demyane, Christine Kelly and Wisam Zoghbi."

"Volunteer pharmacists who have been called to action with little resources and crowd funding

to organise the Sydney March which attracted close to 2,000 peaceful protesters and a Canberra March with hopes of more than 5,000 from across the nation.”

“Although only actioned in the last eight weeks, I believe a true hero stands by their words with action. Heroes take action and lead and support those who can’t.”



#### **Kathryn Daniel**

The managing partner of Chemist Warehouse Lismore, in northern NSW, Kate Daniel lives in Goonellabah, near Lismore. She was nominated for her immense work during the devastating floods that inundated and isolated Lismore and many other northern NSW communities in 2022.

“During the 2022 floods, many pharmacies in Lismore had catastrophic damage and could not trade. Kate and her team extended the trading hours, increased her staff numbers and served thousands of people during this difficult time.”

“She serviced the evacuation centres and also flew stock into Lismore via helicopter as the town was cut off to road traffic. A true example of going above and beyond for the community.”



#### **Lisa Gibson**

Lisa Gibson, the owner and pharmacist in charge of Orana Mall Pharmacy Dubbo was nominated for highlighting the health leadership role and reach of rural and regional community pharmacies, and showing the breadth of services these pharmacists can provide to their communities.

“Born and raised in Dubbo, Lisa has spent almost two decades working in the local community. Providing regional patients with excellent healthcare is a priority for Lisa, who is a diabetes educator and founder of the in-store sleep apnoea clinic.”

“As with many of her colleagues, Lisa stepped up to provide vaccines to residents in the Central West during the Covid pandemic. This work continues for Lisa, who recently led the Life Pharmacy Group (LPG) regional team in helping distribute more than 600 Covid vaccines to aged care residents in Gilgandra, Wellington, Narromine, Yeoval, Bathurst and Gulgong.”

“Lisa worked closely with the PHN to coordinate, and facilitate, the distribution of vaccines to the vulnerable in the community. This would not have been possible without Lisa’s leadership, management, and dedication to community pharmacy.”



#### **Peter Guthrey**

A very well-known figure in Australian pharmacy, and an innovative spokesperson for the profession, Peter Guthrey has been at the forefront of using social media to inform and educate his colleagues.

“I wish to nominate Peter Guthrey for sharing his excellent knowledge of all pharmacy legislation, practice standards and guidelines and much more.”

“It’s no wonder why so many pharmacists look up to Peter. A talented pharmacist and skilled communicator, Peter has developed a unique way of engaging with colleagues—particularly through social media. Many would remember his updates throughout the pandemic as a critical resource as we navigated a complex and constantly changing environment. In the months and years since, he has continued to harness the power of social media to provide accessible practice updates through PSA’s Early Career Pharmacist group, bolstering PSA’s ability to communicate quickly and effectively with thousands of pharmacists around Australia,” said the PSA’s Chris Campbell.

“Peter has led critical policy work including the *Pharmacists in 2023* report, highlighting the changes needed for healthcare evolution to deliver safety and quality improvements in the use of medicines, and better use of pharmacists to improve access to healthcare. He has also been instrumental in the delivery of PSA’s medicine safety reports and continues to be vital to promoting the medicine safety policy agenda across the country.”



#### **Nibhay Nand**

A well-known locum pharmacist who has given first-rate healthcare to many communities, especially in rural and remote areas—as far afield as Christmas Island—Nibhay Nand represents the spirit of pharmacists providing essential care to communities wherever they are located.

“Being able to adapt to isolated communities, shut off from the privileges we all take for granted in a city setting... he is able to excel in communities of various backgrounds and has a vivid learning of languages and interest in cultures and religions.”

“On Christmas Island he had to adapt to Ramadan hours, opening a bit later and opening a bit earlier for their needs. These services to communities aren’t directives but are in his natural spirit to do good for all, within his capacity as a locum.”

"His initiative and willingness to assist in times of need is beyond phenomenal. He was asked to go into Taree during the NSW mid-central coast floods, leaving late in the afternoon to ensure a pharmacist was available the next morning. Advised to leave his car at a service centre, he was picked up by a farmer, taken through the back of paddocks, relocating for the night in a farmhouse (safest place at the time) to be able to be in a vicinity the next morning where he could... provide the prescriptions, advice and support for a community suffering natural disaster."



**Curtis Ruhнау**

A community pharmacy owner in western Sydney, with many years involvement in PDL, and recently elected as president of the Pharmacists Support Service (PSS), Curtis Ruhнау is an advocate for patient care, reaching out to the multicultural, lower socio-economic community served by his pharmacy. Curtis is also a leading advocate for the importance of pharmacists taking care of themselves and their colleagues.

"Curtis Ruhнау has introduced mental health support to thousands of pharmacists when we needed it."

"Great support of first nations customers and community. First class pharmacy design. Massive PDL legacy."

"Curtis genuinely cares for his colleagues and shows this by both providing a listening ear and wise counsel, as well as offering



**Sandra Salter**

Receiving multiple nominations, Dr Sandra Salter is a "passionate pharmacist who started her career as a pharmacy assistant in a small rural pharmacy".

She has worked in pharmacy for 38 years, in clinical pharmacy, hospital pharmacy, community pharmacy and academia.

"Sandra leads national projects in critical areas, including Covid-19 vaccine safety (for which she was awarded 2021 UTS Innovative Pharmacist of the Year). Her vaccine safety work directly led to expansion of vaccine services in Australia, enabling pharmacists to serve communities at top of scope and contribute to major public health initiatives."

"Sandra is leading development and implementation of a Paediatric Eczema Model of Care for community pharmacists, which is now part of the National Allergy Strategy and

**MORE OUTSTANDING NOMINEES**

We would also like to highlight the nominations for the following group of exceptional pharmacists who came extremely close to being included in the final list:

**Jack Buckley**—pharmacist and part-owner of Life Pharmacy Forbes and Flannery's Pharmacy, NSW.

"Jack... has been a pilot for 15 years and has been utilising his hobby of flying to help patients in need. In recent months, Jack has chartered his own aircraft to deliver and administer Covid vaccines to regional aged care facilities as well as flying medical supplies, and pharmacy staff, to towns along the Lachlan River during the NSW flood crisis of 2022."

**Millicent Borowicz**—"Millicent (Milli) is an exceptional pharmacist currently working in rural Tasmania. Milli's dedication to her patients and impact within the community is an inspiration. Her work as an accredited pharmacist has helped to better the lives of many

people within the community and has earned much respect for the pharmacy profession.

"At the announcement of 60-day dispensing, Milli was in contact with various politicians to ensure that the voices of pharmacy were heard. On a local level, Milli engaged with various GPs to educate them about the impact that 60-day dispensing would have on their patients."

**Daniel Chieng**—an antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) pharmacist at Prince of Wales Hospital, Sydney.

"Daniel has continually worked tirelessly to ensure best antimicrobial regimen and minimise toxicity and resistance."

**Lisa Nguyen**—a pioneer of pharmacy's role in supplying and advising on medicinal cannabis. Lisa is the founder of Astrid Health and CEO of Astrid Dispensary, Melbourne.

"For advocating for pharmacists and patients in medicinal cannabis."

expanded roles for pharmacists (including action plan initiation and high-potency topical steroid prescription) are on the agenda.”

“Sandra Salter is an outstanding Pharmacy Hero. She is an exceptional pharmacist who ticks all the boxes. She has ensured that pharmacists are front and centre in eczema, allergy, anaphylaxis and vaccine safety and her work continues to help provide clear pathways for extending our scope of practice.”



#### Tom Simpson

There were multiple nominations for the Tasmanian pharmacist who is the president of the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA).

“Tom’s focus on putting out positive messages about pharmacy is clear. In particular, spearheading ANZCAP and a new recognition model of pharmacy that will drive our profession forward for many years to come is to be commended. In addition, the focus on inclusion of the whole pharmacy team (pharmacists and pharmacy technicians) and highlighting the value of our wonderful technician workforce is a major step forward.”



#### Anthony Tassone

The outgoing president of the Victorian branch of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia has been a leading voice in pharmacy’s campaign to ameliorate the impact of 60-day dispensing. He is also heading the Pharmacy Guild’s SCPA negotiating team. Anthony received many nominations.

“Spearheading the campaign against double dispensing...”

“So much courage under extreme pressure for our benefit. Trent Twomey too!”

“For being prepared to spend so much time with politicians advocating for community pharmacy and for calling out misinformation about misrepresentation in a professional manner.” ■



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