



Bailey Stratford and Kalani MacDonald are New Zealand students working at Lanyon Pharmacy. Picture by Keegan Carroll

NZ students just the tonic for ACT pharmacies

Isabella Oakley

A NEW outreach program with New Zealand students is aiming to solve the pharmacist shortage in the ACT and surrounding regions.

Three students from the University of Otago have been working on the front line in the territory to experience what it's like working in the capital.

New Zealand Association of Pharmacy Students president Kalani MacDonald has found it a positive experience to learn about Australia's system.

"Studying in New Zealand, everyone is always looking to Australia thinking the grass is always greener in terms of pharmacy practice, but no one knows what it's actually like," he said.

"I heard about this program and wanted to have a

look and see for myself what it's like here. It's been more than what I was expecting."

A recent study by the *International Journal of Pharmacy Practice* showed worker retention was a concern, almost 50 per cent of Australian pharmacists intending to quit by 2033.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia says more than 2400 full-time equivalent pharmacists are needed across the country, particularly in regional areas.

The program, run by Life Pharmacy Group, gives Bachelor of Pharmacy students in their fourth year at the university a chance to experience working in the Australian healthcare system and hopes to attract them back post-graduation.

Mr MacDonald was surprised at the differences in Australia.

"In New Zealand you'd have to count up exactly how many medications each person needs and you have to count up the exact amount of tablets; here you just give the whole box," he said.

"It means that here you have more time as a pharmacist to actually go out on the floor and talk to patients, whereas in New Zealand you're more locked up behind the dispensary."

Mr MacDonald said any students looking into the program should jump in and experience it.

Earlier this month the students flew to Cobar to assist with the administration of immunisations at a residential aged care facility.

They have also just returned from a week at LPG pharmacies in Forbes and Parkes, in central western NSW.

"We learnt about how isolated it was in the region and difficulties they get with vaccinating," Mr MacDonald said.

ACT Pharmacy Guild president Simon Blacker said the benefits were mutual, as students witnessed innovative things happening in the community, while learning they could take home.

"We do lose fantastic pharmacists to the public service, such as the TGA, and perhaps they're not using the clinical expertise they've had as much, so we're always looking for opportunities to find keen pharmacists," Mr Blacker said.

Pharmacist Bailey Stratford at Lanyon Pharmacy was hopeful for the future of the industry.

"Sometimes convincing

the students to stay has been hard, but I think we're sort of leaving that now, which is good, and we can show them that it's not this huge draining experience that COVID was," she said.

Christopher Young, pharmacist in charge at Lanyon Pharmacy, said students had been blown away with how strong their patient support is.

"We are making a difference to the community, to the lives of people we know and care about. We just need to show that to the wider population," he said.

"We are very service-based. It's about the customer interaction and how much patient management we offer, and that's what I've been talking to the students about - they didn't know this is what pharmacy could be."

'Taps' heard in hunt for resident after explosion

Cassandra Morgan

RESCUE crews were searching for a survivor feared trapped in the ruins of a townhouse that collapsed after a massive explosion yesterday.

The blast on Waikanda Crescent at Whalan in Sydney's west levelled most of the two-storey home just before 1pm on Saturday, blowing out windows and damaging a neighbouring townhouse.

Crews rescued a woman in her 60s and a wheelchair-bound woman in her 70s from the ruins, and later saved a small dog.

The women were among five people at the scene taken to hospital on Saturday afternoon - three to Mount Druitt Hospital and two to Hawkesbury District Health Service.

All were in a stable condition with minor injuries on Saturday evening as emergency crews continued to search the building for another person feared trapped in the rubble.

"We know that it's the back side of the building where the most rubble has collapsed and that is the generalised area where we're searching now," Fire and Rescue NSW Superintendent Ross Genders told reporters on Saturday.

"At this time, all we know is that they're still alive.

"We have heard taps and noises and that is generalised as being a good indicator that there's still life underneath there."

Supt Genders said the search and rescue operation would be protracted as crews removed the rubble piece by piece, hampered by wet weather.

DEVELOPMENT Unit numbers reduced in Casey complex

Third time lucky for housing proposal?

Brittney Levinson

DEVELOPERS are hoping the third time's a charm for their Gungahlin housing proposal, which the ACT planning authority has knocked back twice.

The previous iterations of the Casey apartment complex sparked fierce backlash from some residents, who say the development is too large for the area. KG Capitol and Jega, the teams behind

the Casey Market Town shopping centre, have scaled back the proposal and resubmitted it for approval.

The team is confident the development is consistent with the Territory Plan and will help provide better housing choices for Canberra, the application states.

Despite the block having no direct residential neighbours, the proposal has caused a stir amongst the local community.

The original plans, submitted in early 2023, included 219 apartments across a nine-storey building and two 11-storey buildings.

After the ACT planning authority knocked back the plans, the developers reduced the height of the buildings by two storeys and cut the number of apartments down to 170.

The plans were again refused, with the planning authority labelling the develop-

ment "excessively tall". The authority received 107 public submissions on the revised application, all opposing the plans. The developers appealed the decision through the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal, where a mediation took place.

"ACAT set aside the reconsideration decision and the matter was remitted back to the Planning Authority," the latest development application states.

"This proposal reflects the design outcome that was agreed at mediation."

The latest plans now include 156 units across the complex, 63 fewer than the original plans.

Another level has been removed, reducing the development to eight storeys.

The design includes a community space with a tiered garden in the middle of the complex. The atrium has been designed to pro-

vide natural light and cross ventilation to the units, the application states.

In their application, the project team said the development would make an important contribution to housing choices in Casey.

A group of residents from Casey and nearby suburbs have campaigned to stop the development at its various stages. The reconsideration application is open for public comment until June 24.