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DUNEDIN TO DUBBO

Amidst an ongoing shortage of healthcare professionals, one young pharmacist has made the leap across the ditch.

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Uzair Qamar is one of the newest faces at Orana Mall Pharmacy in Dubbo where he is completing an internship. Picture by Belinda Soole



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'PRACTICAL HAZARD' Dubbo residents fined for parking in their own driveways

'Not even for 10 minutes'

Sarah Falson

DID you know it's not always legal to park in your own driveway or out the front of your house?

If you're blocking a footpath, you could be fined.

A handful of Dubbo residents learnt the hard way when they were issued tickets over \$300 by Dubbo Regional Council.

gional Council.

A resident of Cardiff Arms Street in Dubbo, Linda Snelson, said she was charged \$302 for parking in the area in front of her house, on the street side of her letterbox.

But according to Ms Snelson, there is no footpath there, and if anyone walks there, they walk on the road.

"In front of my place, I've

laid granite, and put sleepers, and that's from just near the mailbox back to the road," Ms Snelson told the *Daily Liberal*.

"So what happened was I got a fine and I appealed it and appealed it all the way through and still lost because apparently you're not allowed to park on that part at all. Not even for 10 minutes."

To add insult to injury, it was 1am when Ms Snelson was parked there and fined.

She said Dubbo Regional Council told her that, in a skinny street like hers, she should park the way the traffic is facing, with two wheels on the curb and two wheels on the road.

Ms Snelson was one of numerous people who com-

mented on a Facebook post about the issue in Dubbo Community Group, with many claiming it was "revenue raising".

One resident said they had been fined for parking in their own driveway, between the letterbox and the curb.

Some residents on Facebook, however, agreed fines should be issued for this.

"I'm sorry but if you're blocking the footpath you shouldn't be parking there. It means people have to walk on the road to get around your car. Not too hard to do, but think about those with a pram or in a wheelchair who would find it really difficult or even dangerous," one resident wrote.

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'Proud': Jail's art program recognised



Orlander Ruming

"THE general public doesn't really care what goes on behind the walls" of a jail, says Macquarie Correctional Centre senior assistant superintendent Philip Lindley.

But that's just been proved incorrect for the Macquarie Correctional Centre.

The jail's art program has just been named as Wellington's 2024 Community Event of the Year.

"It was a big surprise more than anything, but we're really proud to have got it," Mr Lindley said.

"It's not something you really think of, the community actually acknowledging the work that goes on in a jail. That's really, really bizarre."

The art program at the Macquarie Correctional



Wellington Australia Day ambassador Rhys Muldoon presenting Macquarie Correctional Centre staff Gary Peterson, Tracey Bell and Philip Lindley with the award. Picture by Belinda Soole

Centre started more than five years ago.

"We had some very accomplished artists in our midst, they had been paint-

ing since they were kids. They came to us with an idea and said 'we'd like to run art classes on weekends'. I said, 'no worries, knock yourself

out' and it's basically grown from there," Mr Lindley said.

"It's grown into this massive, monster program... And they're actually churning out

some reasonably good stuff."

The inmates held two exhibitions last year, including one at the jail, and the third is currently open at the Western Gallery. About \$30,000 worth of art was sold at the first exhibition, with part of it going back to charity.

"The community is seeing the good things that are happening, that it's not a normal jail where people get stabbed, bashed, robbed. These guys are giving back. They do a lot of fundraising for the local community," Mr Lindley said.

Mr Lindley estimates more than \$150,000 has been raised by the jail over the years for various charities and community groups.

"That's all driven by them. They come up with the ideas, they come up with how they want to raise money and who they're going to give it to," he said.

"These guys, they've done the wrong thing but here they are trying to give back to the community, and they're

doing it of their own accord. We're not forcing them to do anything."

Mr Lindley said having people pay "good, hard money" for the inmates' work also inspires them "to keep going and do better things".

Overall, the senior assistant superintendent said it was hard to know the impact the art classes - and other similar initiatives - were having on the inmates. He said because they weren't a minimum security centre they weren't able to see the inmates when they leave jail.

However, he highlighted two former inmates who picked up welding skills while they were at Macquarie and now have jobs in Dubbo. Another inmate picked up a media job after leaving prison because of the experience he gained at the jail. "Going out of jail into a good job is very rare. People don't want to take them on. But the skills we're giving them, they're actually real-world skills," Mr Lindley said.

Young pharmacist leaps across the ditch to fill the void

Allison Hore

AMIDST an ongoing shortage of healthcare professionals, one young pharmacist has made the leap across the ditch from Dunedin to Dubbo.

Uzair Qamar, who just graduated from his pharmacy studies at Otago University in New Zealand, will spend the next 12 months completing his internship at the Orana Mall Pharmacy in Dubbo.

For Mr Qamar, working in a pharmacy is all about creating relationships with the community.

"I didn't really know what I wanted to do in uni, but I

remember around that time I was working in a pharmacy and I was the medication delivery person... I would deliver medications to a lot of the elderly," he said.

"I had quite an insight into their lives and what they got up to day to day and I noticed a lot of them didn't have anyone that took care of them... So I spent a lot of my time talking to them, which I got in trouble for, because I came back to the pharmacy pretty late.

"That kind of inspired me to take the healthcare route at university and pursue that."

Mr Qamar arrived in Dubbo in January 2024 after

completing his studies at the end of 2023.

He is one of two pharmacy students from New Zealand who are working on the frontline in the central west as part of a new initiative aimed at encouraging the next generation of pharmacists to complete their internship in rural Australia.

It follows Life Pharmacy Group's inaugural placement program last year, which gave students from the University of Otago experience working in an Australian pharmacy.

Mr Qamar wasn't one of the students who completed the placement, but he still jumped on the opportunity to come to Dubbo.

"From a very young age, I've kind of always shifted from spot to spot... I've never really had the opportunity to really be in one place for a really long time," he said.

"If I made friends in one place, I would eventually have to leave them and go to one another. But I realised through those experiences, I've grown the most.

"So when it came to the end of university, I had a choice to do my internship in New Zealand or Australia, I chose Australian because I've been in New Zealand my entire life and I feel like I could grow a lot more and learn a lot more than if I'd just stayed back home."

Life Pharmacy Group hopes bringing in young pharmacists from overseas could help fill some gaps in the local workforce, if they decide to stick around.

According to research by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, in 2023 there was a shortage of approximately 2,400 full time equivalent pharmacists across Australia.

In 2022, a large pharmacy on Macquarie Street in Dubbo was forced to close when the only qualified pharmacist on staff quit and the company that owned it was unable to find a replacement.

While Mr Qamar hasn't decided if he'll stick around

in Dubbo after his internship is over, he's loving living here for the time being. When he's not working, he's on his bike enjoying the trails around Dubbo.

"There's a lot of big aged care units and there's a lot of people in the higher age bracket that come into this pharmacy... so I get to communicate with a lot of them, which is very pleasant," he said.





"I feel like a lot of people miss out on that experience that you get from being in rural places... you get exposure to a lot of different people and you get to take care of a lot of different types of people."



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