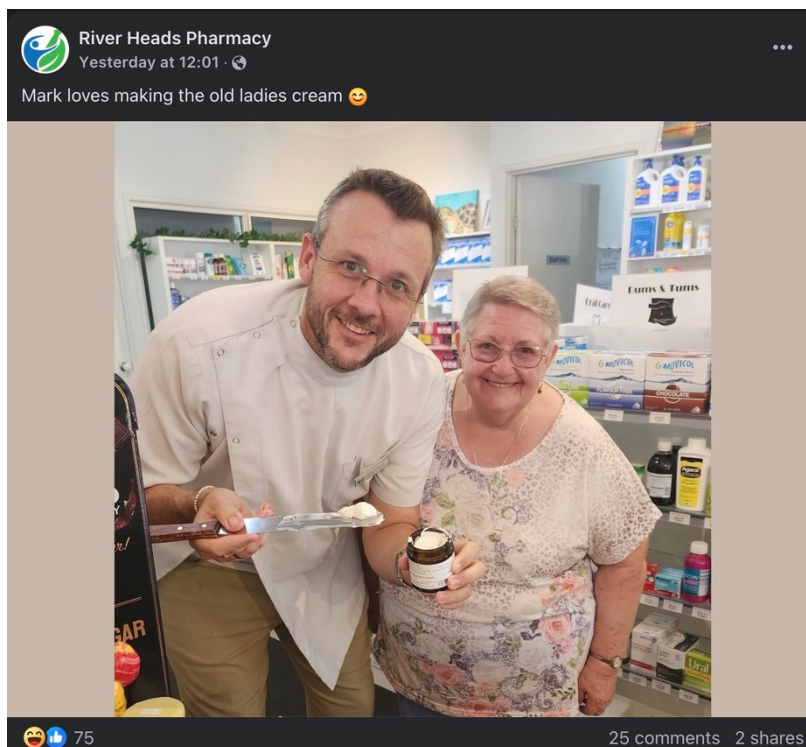


Dear AHPRA,

We are writing to express our objections to a social media post, and treatment of community members who objected to it, by River Heads Pharmacy (Queensland).

The post dated May 8 featured an image of a man dressed in a pharmacist lab coat, holding a spatula and an open jar containing a white substance, posed alongside an elderly woman. The original caption read: 'Mark loves making the old ladies cream 😊'.

(Screenshot below; See also: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1HbfasYbJb/>)



Our supporters expressed concern about the lack of respect for women demonstrated in the post. They objected to River Heads Pharmacy trading on harmful p*rn tropes and s*xual innuendo which normalise the degradation of elderly women and abusive practitioner-client relationships to promote business. They also expressed concern for the woman featured in the post, noting that her name is visible on the jar's label.

Owner, operator and practitioner, Mark McMurtrie has since edited the post, referring to those who objected to it as "easily offended", and mocking community members who in good faith contacted him privately to highlight the harmful nature of the post and urge him to remove it. In an apparent attempt to belittle and intimidate a community member, Mark commented on the post with a screenshot of a private email, and a face-palm emoji.

We believe the post and Mark's comments are in breach of the National Pharmacy Board (under AHPRA Code of Conduct) Principle 8: Professional behaviour which

states: "Practitioners must display a standard of professional behaviour that warrants the trust and respect of the community. This includes practising ethically and honestly."

We believe the post promotes the idea that women and their bodies are always fair game to be s*xualised, objectified and mocked, at any age. This idea harms women by contributing to a culture in which we are seen as less than human, and in which violence against us is trivialised.

There is nothing humorous about this post, which is how River Heads Pharmacy defended it. In fact, we believe the depiction to be sinister: a practitioner viewing his vulnerable and trusting elderly, female clients as wanting and seeking s*xual favours from him, and he as willing to provide them.

We note the rising incidence of complaints about practitioner boundary violations reported to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency in recent years - by 223% in 2022-23 compared to the three years prior. Complaints included allegations of s*xual harassment and s*xual assault. River Heads Pharmacy's post is even more disturbing in light of this data.

We are calling on AHPRA to instruct River Heads Pharmacy to remove this post and provide guidance to its owner Mark McMurtrie reiterating its value of respect for community members, including in their marketing, advertising and social media posts.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Lyn Kennedy | Collective Shout | Campaign Strategy Team

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