

## Diabetes funding

JOHN Howard marked World Diabetes Day yesterday by announcing \$22m in extra funding to provide insulin pumps for type-one diabetes sufferers.

The three-year funding would subsidise about 3000 pumps, and it's the first time the devices have been subsidised.

The program will target children aged under 18, with Diabetes Australia ceo Matt O'Brien saying the move was a "great result for kids".

MEANWHILE the PM also announced \$4m in extra funding for Parkinson's Australia, to subsidise apomorphine injections.

## Avandia FDA move

THE US Food and Drug Administration has announced that GSK's Avandia must carry a "black box" warning that the diabetes medication can cause chest pain or heart attacks.

The FDA said it would keep the drug on the market "because we have concluded that there is not enough evidence to conclude that the risk for heart attack or cardiac ischaemia is higher than for other type-2 diabetes drugs".

A statement issued by GSK said "Avandia remains a safe and effective medicine for most patients with type-2 diabetes when used appropriately".

The medication has been under a cloud since a meta-analysis study claimed a correlation between Avandia and a higher risk of heart attack in patients.

## Pharmacy skills program

THE Pharmacy Guild has warmly welcomed a commitment made yesterday by the government to work with community pharmacy on a new program supporting pharmacy business skill development.

A re-elected Coalition would provide \$6.5m towards a series of practical workshops "designed to improve strategic business management and practice skills of pharmacists and key pharmacy staff," with the aim of helping community pharmacy to "continue meeting the challenges of delivering medicines and pharmacy services in a timely, efficient and cost effective manner".

Under the scheme all community pharmacists will be invited to attend a two-day course

focusing on accounting, human resource management, marketing and change management, and the program will also include funding for locums where required for pharmacists to attend.

Payment will also be provided for meals, transport, and for rural pharmacists accommodation will also be included.

Guild President Kos Sclavos said the program will complement the existing Practice Change Incentive Program which is funded under the Fourth Agreement.

"The program recognises the essential primary health role pharmacies play in the Australian community, including the provision of vital medicines and a wide range of health care advice," Sclavos said.

## A new cigarette?

A NEW electronic cigarette could provide a whole new way for people to get addicted to nicotine.

The battery-powered device includes an atomiser providing varying dosages from 0 to 16mg, with the Chinese manufacturer Ruyan saying it "provides smokers with a clean alternative."

"It has no tar, no carbon monoxide and no cancer-causing chemical," the firm claimed.

The tip glows red when air is breathed through it, and authorities have confirmed the device could be used in smoke-free areas because current regulations deal with products capable of being ignited.

## Roche gets out ruler

ROCHE says it's entered into a confidentiality agreement with its takeover target, US automated diagnostics firm Ventana, to allow it to now undertake due diligence.

Ventana has hitherto steadfastly resisted the bid, claiming Roche's \$75 per share offer is "grossly inadequate".

## Rural winners

THE winners of the rural pharmacy *Pharmacy - Gr8 pay & lots of jobs* competition are Tania Henshall, Stavross Bailey, Benny Tang, Louise Atkins and Teneal Morgan.

Each winner will receive a \$200 iTunes voucher.

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## DISPENSARY CORNER

THIS guy really needed to buy the new Japanese in-car toilet (PD 25 Oct).

34-year-old German motorist Heinrich Mannheim has been hospitalised after falling off a motorway flyover as he attempted to relieve himself.

Mannheim was caught short during a major traffic jam late last night, and said he didn't see the edge of the A20 bridge when he decided to take a leak at Neukloster in northern Germany.

He was treated for shock and mild concussion.

A SO-CALLED "magnet man" in Romania has decided to use his powers to heal the sick.

Aurel Raileanu, who reportedly has an incredible ability to make objects stick to his body, attributes his gift to an innate 'magnetic field' and until now has been performing stunts in which he focuses his attention on heavy objects and they "suddenly become glued to him."

However when he got a job at a local hospital he found patients reporting miraculous cures to ailments including migraines, back aches, sprains and even stomach ulcers.

"People I came into contact with repeatedly said they had a feeling of intense energy after I laid hands on them," he said.

"If I can relieve pain and suffering then that is a greater gift than getting TV sets to stick to my biceps," Raileanu added.

A DISABLED woman in the US is suing her landlord, after being denied permission to keep a miniature horse to pull her wheelchair.

50-year-old Patty Cooper bought a 1m-high pony, aiming to use it to pull the chair to the bus stop and into her local town in Waitsfield, Vermont.

However the Central Vermont Community Land Trust has denied her request to keep the horse, named Earl, at home, over concerns about lack of grazing space and manure.

Cooper insists Earl is house-trained and will live happily in a stall in her living room.



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