



The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia

This week's update from the Guild

PBS Reports

Readers may be aware of a number of media reports last week regarding price increases to some PBS medicines for some patients after the introduction of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Reforms on 1 August.

The original story, published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 11 September, was generally balanced.

The Guild was allowed to explain that the PBS saw a reduction in price for consumers on over 1000 safety net medicines, with far more medicines becoming less expensive than those that went up slightly because of the increase in mark-up.

Subsequent media reports, particularly on some radio stations, however, were not balanced with these details and implied that consumers would be generally worse off.

As such, pharmacists may encounter customers who are confused and concerned about this issue.

The Guild advises pharmacists to communicate the following key messages:

- Increases in prices are generally very slight, with the average increase being under \$2.
- The medicines that became cheaper for consumers (with an average price reduction of \$2) were far greater in number and volume than those that went up in price slightly.
- The price rises apply only to general consumers and not pensioners.
- The Reforms will save the Federal Budget an estimated \$6 billion over 10 years and ensure the ongoing viability of the PBS, which benefits all consumers.
- Pharmacies are not "better off" as a result of this, with the increase being put in place by the Government to ensure that the Reforms did not have an unfair impact on pharmacies and in doing so threaten their financial viability.

Report urges listing cuts

A KEY Productivity Commission report has urged changes to PBS listing processes as a way of reducing regulatory burdens on businesses in Australia.

The review, released today, recommends increasing the cost threshold at which PBS listings require Cabinet approval, cutting the time and cost of TGA approval processes, and the introduction of a "harmonised national system for approving multi-centre clinical trials."

Peak pharmaceutical manufacturer body Medicines

Australia has strongly backed the report, with MA ceo Ian Chalmers citing a recommendation that the *Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee should be allowed to conduct its assessment of a medicine for PBS listing in parallel with the TGA's assessment of the application to register the medicine.*

"This one measure could reduce by a full year the time taken to list a new medicine on the PBS," Chalmers said, calling on the govt to implement the changes as soon as possible.

He said Medicines Australia had been working closely with the govt to "find ways of improving access to innovative new medicines for Australian patients."

HIP Vic appointment

LISTED pharmacy franchisor Health Information Pharmacy has appointed Tracey Bushby as its new Victorian Franchise Manager.

Bushby is a qualified dispensary technician with over ten years industry experience, having worked for a number of major brands incl Terry White and Guardian as well as run her own beauty business.

ACT vacancy

THE Pharmacy Guild is seeking an experienced person to join the ACT team as Branch Director.

Based in Barton, ACT, the role involves providing management support, services and implementation of branch initiatives for the ACT Branch.

Applicants should be prepared to lobby peak industry bodies and government, generate revenue and deliver strategic input for the Guild's programs.

For a copy of the position description, call the ACT Branch on 02 6270 1870.



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DISPENSARY CORNER

AUTHORITIES in Britain have used the case of a rabbit without floppy ears to highlight abuses of the country's emergency services hotline.

A Scottish woman frivolously rang the 999 number to call for help when her new bunny didn't match its description in a newspaper advertisement.

Officials also described a case where callers had rung up to complain about being splashed by a car driving through a puddle.

DRINKING chamomile tea is well known to soothe the nerves, but it may have other benefits too.

Researchers in Japan have found that a daily cuppa of the herbal tea can help prevent some of the complications of type 2 diabetes, including loss of vision and nerve and kidney damage.

They tested an extract of chamomile on diabetic rats, but the results don't say whether the rodents were also calmer as a result of the therapy.

MAHATMA Gandhi did much for India, but his little-known contribution to the country's hygiene is now on display in a museum at one of his former homes in Ahmedabad.

Gandhi apparently used a specially built mobile lavatory, which allowed excrement to be used as fertiliser in fields around the home.

The toilet was removed some years ago as inappropriate, but has now been recreated after many visitors asked where he answered the call of nature.

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