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## Is Australia better off?

**PATIENTS** would be worse off if Australia adopted a New Zealand-style access to medicines policy, according to Medicines Australia Chief Executive Dr Brendan Shaw.

Responding to a report on pharmaceutical prices published this week by the Grattan Institute (PD yest) Shaw said proposals to cap spending on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme would limit patient's access to medicines.

"If you want a how-to guide for turning your health system into that a third-world country, this report would be it," Shaw said.

"Capping the PBS would kill consumer access to new therapies as the experience in New Zealand proves.

"It undermines the fundamental principal of universal and affordable access to medicines that underpins the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and has done for 60 years," he added.

Shaw also went on to say that "Anyone who wants to emulate the New Zealand model of medicines policy should remember that New Zealanders have access to less than half the number of new medicines that Australians have and that New Zealand is stone motherless last in

the OECD access to medicines rankings".

"So much so that when New Zealanders can't access a variety of new medicines in their country they come over here," he said.

**MEANWHILE** the Generic Medicines Industry Association also got in on the act, calling the report's concerns that the Australian Government is paying more than NZ for some generic medicines "unfounded".

"These concerns are unfounded as the market-based price disclosure policy ensures that the government benefits from the competitive generic medicines sector in Australia," GMiA said.

Speaking in the wake of the report, CEO of GMiA Kate Lynch said that reforms to the PBS introduced in 2010 are currently delivering savings to the public of \$1.9 billion over four years.

"The PBS is already subject to complex policy reforms," Lynch said.

"For the sake of patients and ensuring a secure and consistent chain of supply, we need to get those reforms bedded down first before embarking on any more policy change," she added.

## Venom handbook

**BIOSL** today released A Clinician's Guide to Australian Venomous Bites and Stings: incorporating the updated CSL Antivenom Handbook.

The handbook is designed to provide detailed info for healthcare professionals to help them quickly assess the best treatment path for an envenomed patient.

## Lung cancer awareness

**THE** Cancer Institute NSW and the Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research, Jillian Skinner have announced a new lung cancer public education campaign.

Titled Listen Out for Lung Cancer, the campaign encourages people across NSW to listen out for the symptoms of lung cancer among their family, friends, community and colleagues.

The main campaign message is that if people have key lung cancer symptoms, they should see their doctor, irrespective of whether they smoke or not.

The three key symptoms of lung cancer the campaign encourages people to listen out for include: persistent cough (lasting longer than 3 weeks), a change in cough, and coughing up blood.

See [www.cancerinstitute.org.au](http://www.cancerinstitute.org.au).



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## Largest facility in Brissie

**THIS** week APhS Packaging will open the doors to one of the largest and most sophisticated DAA manufacturing facilities in the world.

Located in Brisbane and measuring 1985m<sup>2</sup>, the cleanroom manufacturing facility is believed to be one of the biggest of its kind, and came to being with a \$6 million pricetag.

The facility has the capacity to deliver 1.8 million sachets every week into community pharmacies across Australia, and employs some of the industry's most cutting-edge technology, including a Tablet Inspection System (TIS), designed to identify sachet errors via a digital image before any medication is released to a customer.

"Our new TGA-licenced facility gives us the capacity to continue to meet the ever growing demand for accurate and quality medication sachets, now and well into the future," said Cathie Reid, APhS Packaging CEO.



View of a drug packaging suite at the facility

## The top Australian killers

**HEART** disease is still the number one killer of Australian men and women, according to new figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The report, *Causes of Death in Australia*, found that despite being the number one killer, deaths from heart disease have fallen steadily since 2002.

According to the numbers there were 21,513 deaths from heart disease in 2011, with heart disease accounting for 15% of all deaths in 2011 compared to 19% of all deaths in 2002.

"Heart disease has remained the leading cause of death in Australia over the last ten years and continued to be the leading cause in 2011," said James Eynstone-Hinkins, Director of the Health and Vitals Statistics Unit.

Meanwhile, there were 9,864 deaths caused by dementia and Alzheimer's disease in 2011, comprising 7% of all deaths, the majority of which occurred in people aged 75 or over.

Another big killer was lung cancer, which was found to have made up 6% of all deaths and 19% of all deaths from cancer - making it the fourth leading cause of death for Australians in 2011, whilst prostate

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## Prostate recruits

**AUSTRALIAN** hospitals are recruiting men aged over 50 into a unique global clinical trial that aims to assess the impact on sexual function of medicines used to reduce the size of the prostate.

Australia is the only country outside of the EU in the study.

"We are very keen to look at whether treating enlarged prostates with specific medicines might lead to improvements or decreases in sexual function. We've got an open mind about the outcomes," said urologist Associate Professor Henry Woo, who is leading the study from the Sydney Adventist Hospital in Sydney.

The researchers are looking for men aged 50 or over who may be experiencing trouble with their "waterwork" (because this is a key sign of an enlarged prostate).

Not fully emptying the bladder, needing to go to the toilet very regularly, straining at the start of urination, having a weak stream or waking up regularly at night to pass urine are all symptoms of an enlarged prostate.

The study has been approved by a Research Ethics Committee, info is kept confidential, and travel expenses can be reimbursed.

Call 1800 800 285 for details.

cancer was the fifth most common cause of death for men.

Among women, breast cancer was found to be the sixth most common cause of death.

There were also 1,530 deaths from falls among people aged over 75 last year (with women accounting for 57% of these deaths).

## Arthritis assistance

**THIS** week millions of Australians battling with osteoarthritis and joint pain will benefit from the launch of a world first, easy-to-use website which offers people a chance to gain control over their pain, [MyJointPain.org.au](http://MyJointPain.org.au).

Launched as part of Arthritis Awareness Week (17 - 23 March), the website offers three major support functions.

Firstly, the user will answer questions about their situation, they then receive a summary of their risk of hip or knee osteoarthritis along with management options for osteoarthritis in any joint.

In addition users will receive regular updates and ongoing support to keep them on track with managing their joint pain.

17th Feb – 31st March, 2013



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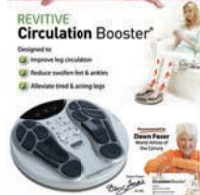


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## Guild Update

### Urgent advice on HMR claim deadlines

Pharmacists are advised of the urgent need to lodge claims for Home Medicines Reviews conducted up to and including last Thursday, 14 March 2013.

The Department of Human Services has advised that claims for these HMRs must be lodged on or before this Friday 22 March 2013, otherwise claims WILL NOT BE PAID.

This gives pharmacists just three more days to lodge these claims.

Recent amendments to the HMR Program Specific Guidelines and MMR Programs Terms and Conditions came into effect for all Home Medicines Reviews conducted on or after last Friday 15 March 2013.

These changes include a requirement for prior approval to conduct a patient interview in any location other than the patient's home.

They also require prior approval for a registered pharmacist (not accredited) to conduct the HMR interview.

New forms for claiming and for the prior approval process can be obtained from the Department of Human Services.

All information and resources, including a detailed Frequently Asked Questions and a factsheet, are available for download at [www.5cpa.com.au/hmr](http://www.5cpa.com.au/hmr).



The Pharmacy  
Guild of Australia

## Pharmacies: product focus

AUSTRALIAN pharmacies should place importance on delivering new products and services to complement their core dispensing practices, according to the newly appointed Executive Director of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, David Quilty.

The comments come as part of Quilty's keynote address at Sigma's 2013 Annual Amcal and Guardian Retail Conference.

"The success of the Amcal, Amcal Max and Guardian retail pharmacy brands has been built on the pillars of quality care, customer service and accessibility which are the hallmarks of Australia's community pharmacy network," said Quilty.

"Community pharmacy continues to enjoy very high levels of public support and it is important that the sector actively seeks out opportunities to deliver new products and services that will build on its core dispensing business and

further enhance its deserved reputation as a trusted health destination," he said.

MEANWHILE Sigma has confirmed that it's conference has drawn large crowds, with attendance up by a whopping 20% this year.

PICTURED below at the conference is (from left): Brian Jamieson (Chairman, Sigma Board), Andrew Robinson (Owner/Pharmacist, Amcal Max Glen Iris), David Quilty (Executive Director, The Pharmacy Guild of Australia), Mark Hooper (CEO & Managing Director, Sigma), Gary Dunne (COO, Sigma).



## WIN A BOSISTO'S PRIZE PACK



Pharmacy Daily has teamed up with FGB Natural Products this week and is giving three lucky readers the chance to win an amazing Bosisto's prize pack (pictured to the left), valued at \$225 each. Bosisto's is embarking on an exciting project to plant 1 million trees in 2013!

Customers can help Bosisto's 'Plant a Tree' by purchasing any specially-marked 200mL Eucalyptus oil, available instore from May. The project aims to support local communities, the economy and the environment. For more info visit [www.fgb.com.au](http://www.fgb.com.au).

You could be the lucky winner of a Bosisto's pack valued at \$225. Just answer the following question in 25 words or less by COB on Friday.

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## DISPENSARY CORNER

NEED energy quick?

In the search for the strongest coffee, one man has created what he now calls, Death Wish Coffee.

The man behind the Wish, Mike Brown, is a barista who decided to break out and make his own blend after getting fed up with customers constantly ranting at him for "stronger coffee".

"I had to go through the process every day of explaining to them that dark roasts were actually the least caffeinated," Brown said.

"This began my journey for finding and roasting the Death Wish bean and after many trial and error processes I found it.

"The type of blend, bean and roasting process we use makes Death Wish Coffee the strongest in the world," he added.



## CSO awareness

THE NPSA is launching a CSO awareness campaign at APP2013 and is calling for pharmacists to get involved by sharing their CSO stories.

"NPSA is seeking your support in sharing your views on how important the CSO is - not just for you and your pharmacy, but for healthcare of all Australians," said NPSA in a statement.

"We are also looking for any examples of when your wholesaler went beyond the normal requirements to get medications to you," NPSA added.

NPSA will be recording these video interviews with participating pharmacists at the Gold Coast Convention Centre in Meeting Room 1 during the following times: Thursday 21 March from 2.30pm - 4.30pm; and Friday 22 March from 10am - 12noon.