

My Chemist wins Roy Morgan PoTY

AUSTRALIAN pharmacy retailer My Chemist has taken out top spot in the seventh year of Roy Morgan's Customer Satisfaction Awards in the Pharmacy of the Year (PoTY) category, held Tuesday night in Melbourne.

Nine Australian pharmacy chains were in the running for the award with My Chemist hanging on to pole position across the board in customer satisfaction based on 12 months of data.

Chemist Warehouse Group chief operating officer, Mario Tascone says, "We pride ourselves on our high level of customer service; it is a key component of the business and we are thrilled that My Chemist has been awarded this honor.

"This accolade not only speaks to the strength of our My Chemist brand but to all of the staff across the business who play a vital part in our daily operations," Tascone said.

Codeine price hike

SINCE products containing codeine became prescription only 01 Feb, there have been concerns expressed by consumers they are paying more for these products.

Speaking to 2GB's Ben Fordham, Pharmacy Guild NSW Branch president David Heffernan critically blamed the TGA and Health Minister Greg Hunt for price moves.

While consumers are blaming pharmacists for the price hikes, Sanofi today confirmed that it has not increased the price it charges for prescription only medicines which contain codeine.

MCC on cautionary RACP

AUSTRALIA'S peak medical cannabis industry group, the Medical Cannabis Council (MCC), today said the Royal Australian College of Physicians' (RACP) reticence towards medical cannabis "disregards patient and international experience".

In its recent paper on the use of cannabinoids, published in the *MJA* (**PD** 19 Feb), the RACP stated there was a need for more research and testing before doctors prescribed medical cannabis to patients.

The *MJA* has declared it has "no conflicts of interest in regard to the issue of medicinal cannabis".

The MCC said in a statement that while it "agrees more research, testing and proper approval processes are required to continue to support the already robust case for cannabis as a therapeutic good, the RACP's prohibitive stance on life-saving medication sends the wrong message and may hinder the important progress already made on medical cannabis".

The Medical Cannabis Council said it was "disappointing the RACP's perspective comes at a time when Australians who are desperate for access to medical cannabis are finding this legal product nearly unattainable due to complex access".

MCC board member and cardiologist Dr Ross Walker said the benefits of medical cannabis were well known.

"All the trials to date have been supportive of medical cannabis as effective in the treatment of epilepsy, pain and other

conditions," Walker said.

Although he acknowledged there had not yet been any "gold standard" (large, long term, randomised, double blind) clinical trials in this field, "medical cannabis has been proven to work for patients with various conditions".

University of Sydney's Professor Iain McGregor was quoted saying the RACP failed to mention the benefits of medical cannabis in slowing down opiate use.

Blackmores profit up 20%

BLACKMORES has reported overall group revenue was boosted 9% to \$287m for the six months to 31 Dec primarily from "consistent sales growth with improved profitability" and resulting in net profit after tax for shareholders at \$34m, up 20% on the previous corresponding period (**PD** Breaking News yesterday).

Revenue in Australia and New Zealand was \$121m, slightly down from the previous year as the broader consumer market remained subdued and China-influenced sales continued to move to Blackmores' direct China channels, directors said. The overall impact of this was muted by the strength of the group's business diversity.

Even so, H1 earnings from the ANZ business was improved 19% to \$26m compared with the previous corresponding period due to changes in the cost structure of this business and phasing of expenses.

Highlights were the performances

E-cigs support detox

ELECTRONIC cigarettes, used as an alternative form of nicotine replacement, are well tolerated by alcoholics admitted to hospital for detoxification and could help curb smoking during hospital stays, according to a study published today in the *NZ Medical Journal*.

"The electronic cigarettes proved more popular than standard nicotine-replacement therapy and were at least as effective," said lead author Dr Penelope Truman.

CLICK HERE to access the study.

of Blackmores new probiotics and children's gummy vitamin categories.

China sales grew 27% delivering 4% profit growth.

The new state-of-the-art distribution facility at Bungarribee in Western Sydney was now fully operational.

Directors concluded, "The first half performance gives Blackmores a strong foundation for the full year with the delivery of an improved sales and profit result whilst investing in growth initiatives."

China and Indonesia businesses were very encouraging chairman Stephen Chapman said, tempering his enthusiasm with reference to supply issues and the soft Australian market both impacting on H2 results - these comments pushing the share price down 14.7% yesterday.

Chapman added, "We remain confident we will continue to deliver good profit growth for the full year" - see asx.com.au.

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Dispensary Corner

DEDICATION to the task, what every company owner and manager dreams of in staff, was demonstrated to the nth degree when a US morning radio show presenter gave birth on air during her show.

Cassidy Proctor, a weekday morning presenter on The Arch station in the US city of St Louis, broadcast her birth by Caesarean section on Tuesday.

Talk about placement opportunities, the station was flooded with offers to sponsor segments and provide samples for the new mother and baby.

Proctor told *BBC* that giving birth on air was "an extension of what I already do every day on our radio show as I share all aspects of my life with the listeners".

The star of the moment, who weighed 7lbs 6oz, has been called Jameson after listeners selected the name in a competition in Jan.

AN ESCAPEE red Limousin beef cow (pictured) that fled from a slaughterhouse last month has gained celebrity status as it defends its life and freedom, roaming a lake-filled region near Nysa, in the southwest of Poland.

Governor Czeslaw Bilobran said Wednesday the cow was "cunning and clever and uses the difficult terrain to trick the search group," swimming from island to island.

When caught, it will be put in a local animal reserve, having earned its freedom by bravery.



New \$35m global Ego HQ

FEDERAL Minister for Health Greg Hunt officially opened Ego Pharmaceuticals' new \$35m global headquarters in Dandenong South yesterday.

Ego Pharmaceuticals says the investment comes off the back of huge growth in Ego's international exports, which are now approaching 50% of the company's sales, selling into areas including the UK, Middle East and Asia.

Winner of a 2017 Exporter of the Year award, Ego is best known for brands such as QV Skincare,



SunSense, Aqium hand sanitiser and Pinetarsol.

Established in 1953, the family owned business now manufactures 120 products in Melbourne and employs 593 staff across 12 nations, with expectations to double its business again over the next six years.

Pictured are Greg Hunt with Ego md Alan Oppenheim and Jane Oppenheim in front of the new Melbourne facility.

J&J choice employer

THE Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies in Australia has announced that it has been granted the Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation in 2017-18 by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), for the first time.

WGEA is a government agency created by the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012.

"We believe that building a culture of inclusion and innovation needs to be intentional," said Sue Martin, md of J&J Australia and NZ.

Win with Dreambaby®

Each day this week Pharmacy Daily and Dreambaby® are giving readers the chance to win the latest from Dreambaby® valued at \$44.90.

Prize includes 'Herbert' the Turtle Room & Bath Thermometer - RRP: \$19.95. Made from BPA Free and Phthalate Safe durable waterproof material, Herbert gives fast and accurate temperature readings. You can also win Dreambaby®'s new non-slip super light-weight and simple-to-clean EZY-Potty - RRP\$24.95. www.dreambaby.com.au or call 02 9386 4000.

To win, be the first person from VIC or TAS to send the correct answer to the question below to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

What are the RRP's of Dreambaby®'s 'Herbert' the Turtle Room & Bath Thermometer and EZY-POTTY?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Anna Phan from Pooraka Compounding Pharmacy, SA.



Abstract submissions

CHOOSING Wisely Australia, an NPS MedicineWise initiative has said abstracts for its national meeting in Canberra 30 May this year need to be received by 28 Feb.

Details around the various presentation options are available at choosingwisely.org.au.

Events Calendar

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* events calendar, opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email info@pharmacydaily.com.au.

16-18 Mar: Annual Therapeutic Update 2018; Fairmont Resort, Blue Mountains; for details and registrations visit: www.psa.org.au

16-18 Mar: Foundation Seminar in Clinical Medication Management; Rydges Sydney; register here: www.shpa.org.au

21-22 Mar: eMedication Management Conference; Raddison Blu Plaza Sydney; book your spot at: www.informa.com.au

3-6 May: APP 2018; Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre; find out more and register at: www.appconference.com

27 May-8 Jun: 43rd PSA Offshore Refresher Conference; San Francisco; travel information and registrations at: www.psa.org.au

30 May - 1 Jun: National Medicines Symposium (NMS) 2018; National Convention Centre, Canberra; registrations now open: www.nps.org.au