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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news, plus a full page from Willach.

State-of-art tech

WILLACH allows you to rethink your dispensary set-up with the latest in robotic innovation for more efficiency. See more on the **back page**.

PSS' listening ear

THE Pharmacists' Support Service (PSS) President, John Coppock, is reassuring pharmacists that "the profession is strong and will pull together."

"While current uncertainty may create anxiety about the future, in time we will have clarity and be able to adjust to changes as they happen."

Meanwhile, the PSS is **HERE** to support pharmacists & students.

OIA letter confirms lack of consultation

THE Rural Pharmacy Network Australia (RPNA) is "shocked and alarmed" at new information from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's Office of Impact Analysis (OIA) that the recently announced 60-day dispensing proposal was assessed as 'containing a number of shortcomings...' and 'was lacking in some elements, such as not conducting a reasonable level of consultation'.

The May Budget policy, which is set to drastically change the way the PBS works, was assessed by the OIA as 'adequate', which means it could be used to inform a government decision, despite the fact that the policy is not based on consultation with the community pharmacy sector, including rural and remote pharmacies.

A letter penned by the Executive Director of the Office of Impact Analysis to the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health stated, 'the impact analysis

would have benefitted from more recent public consultations on potential stakeholder impacts, particularly for small businesses and pharmacies in rural and remote areas'.

The RPNA asserted that the assessment of 'adequate' is only one grade above 'insufficient' and the minimum level necessary for the government to make a decision.

"So the greatest change to pharmacy funding in Australia's history does not meet the criteria to be evaluated as 'best practice' and wasn't even assessed prior to the budgetary measure being officially announced in the media," stated the RPNA.

The organisation expressed its astonishment at "the lack of consultation with rural pharmacies and that the policy could be assessed as 'adequate' without such engagement".

While the government is selling this policy as a win for patients in terms of affordability and

convenience, the policy will mean significant reductions in core funding that pharmacies receive, the RPNA confirmed.

"Had appropriate consultation occurred, it would have been evident that the policy will lead to a reduction in pharmacy services, reduced opening hours, job losses, and likely pharmacy closures, as is being voiced by rural pharmacists across Australia.

"Many towns are losing their medical services and now their pharmacies are under threat too.

"A lot is at stake here as rural patients outside of major centres are at risk of losing more than they stand to gain."

The government has budgeted a doubling of the Regional Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance to support rural pharmacy viability, but members of the RPNA are reporting that this will "barely suffice to keep dispensaries open let alone support delivery of services such as vaccinations".



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Mortality study

MEDICAL experts in Australasia have raised concerns about the rising burden of severe acute pancreatitis (SAP) in intensive care units, with no change in mortality rates in these critically ill patients in almost two decades.

In the absence of a specific cure for acute pancreatitis, the Flinders University and Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society (ANZICS) collaborative study calls for more targeted clinical research to find treatments aimed at reducing prolonged stays in hospital and mortality in a disease which is increasingly common.

The new study, based on analysis of ANZICS clinical data from 12,635 SAP adult patients, covers three consecutive six-year periods from 2003-2020.

Learn more [HERE](#).

MCIA appoints Holmes

THE Medicinal Cannabis Industry Association (MCIA) has appointed Patty Holmes (**pictured**) as its new Executive Officer.

A pioneer of the Australian medicinal cannabis industry, Holmes will succeed Rosemary Richards and assume responsibilities from 01 Jun.

Holmes brings 15 plus years of experience to the position, having worked previously at various pharmaceutical companies, such as Chief Operating Officer at Althea and most recently in establishing a consulting company for novel therapeutics.

Holmes is passionate about improving patient access to medicinal cannabis in a flourishing medicinal cannabis industry and looks forward to further driving membership value.

The outgoing Richards has been instrumental in the establishment and management of the MCIA including governance arrangements, growing the



membership base and increasing MCIA's industry profile.

Richards, through her consulting business, will remain in contact with MCIA for specific projects.

Peter Crock, MCIA Chair expressed his thanks to Richards "for her service and dedication to the organisation & the cause, and wished her the best for the future.

"I look forward to working with Patty to continue MCIA's important work, building on the tremendous foundation that we have established thanks to Rosemary's guidance, incredible work capacity and ethic."

Packer's \$7m gift

BUSINESSMAN and investor James Packer, jointly with The Packer Family Foundation, has gifted \$7 million to mental health research at UNSW Sydney, with the establishment of the James Packer Chair in Mood Disorders.

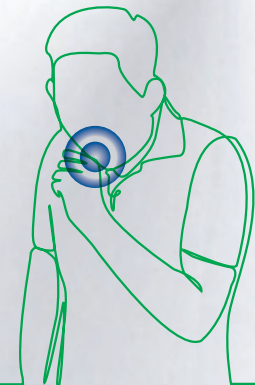
This donation will also set up Mindgardens, the first research centre to focus exclusively on disorders that involve the brain, emotions, nervous system and thinking processes.

"It is no secret that I have struggled with mental health problems in the past," confessed Packer.

"I am a passionate advocate of finding ways to improve mental health outcomes, and I am hopeful that my contribution towards this research will generate positive outcomes in this field, & in so doing significantly improve the lives of people battling mental health issues everywhere."

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Sunshine Coast's top charity winter ball

STEPS Pathways Charity hosted its Sponsors Appreciation Luncheon last Fri to thank its sponsors who supported last year's STEPS Grand Winter Ball, while also unveiling details of this year's ball.

The STEPS Grand Winter Ball is a premier Sunshine Coast black-tie event to raise funds for young adults living with a disability and autism, with more on it [HERE](#).

STEPS Managing Director Carmel Crouch emphasised that "our students gain the knowledge and confidence to navigate various aspects of life to lead independent and fulfilling lives.

"Without the generous ongoing support of our sponsors, these opportunities simply wouldn't exist.

"The STEPS Grand Winter Ball is our biggest fundraising event of the year, and our sponsors play a crucial role in making it a resounding success every time.



"Their contributions continue to be instrumental in transforming the lives of individuals with disabilities," Crouch said.

The event saw many Sunshine Coast businesses attending, including presenting partner of the 2023 STEPS Grand Winter Ball Brendan Wavell-Smith of Prima Commercial Fitouts, Brett Mills of Ken Mills Toyota and Jason Van der Walt of ion smart business solutions.

New Sandoz Board set

SANDOZ has taken the next steps to prepare for its planned listing on the Swiss Stock Exchange.

The Novartis Board of Directors has approved the recommendations of the Sandoz Chairman-designate, Gilbert Ghostine, on the structure of the proposed Sandoz Board of Directors and has nominated all of its future members.

The Sandoz Board of Directors, will have 10 members in total and three sub-committees called Science, Innovation & Development, Human Capital & ESG and an Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee.

The Sandoz Board will start preparatory work from next month, and will effectively be following the planned spin-off of Sandoz in the second half of this year, subject to the Novartis Board of Directors and shareholders' approval.

The new board members include Dr Karen J. Huebscher, non-executive board member in many

companies, institutions and former CEO of Solvias Group; François-Xavier Roger, Chief Financial Officer of Nestlé S.A.; Urs Riedener, past CEO of Swiss company EMMI Group; Dr Shamiram R. Feinglass, most recently Chief Medical Officer, Danaher; Aarti Shah, former Chief Information and Digital Officer & Senior Vice President at Eli Lilly; Yannis Skoufalos, former Global Product Supply Officer at Procter & Gamble; Remco Steenberg, Chief Financial Officer of Deutsche Lufthansa; Dr Maria Varsellona, Chief Legal Officer and Company Secretary at Unilever, plus one more person who will be nominated at next year's AGM.

In total, four out of 10 members of the new Sandoz Board of Directors will be female.

Chairman-designate Ghostine shared "I am delighted and looking forward to working with the new board to help set the strategic direction for Sandoz and support its future development".

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Dispensary Corner

A GROWING number of young Americans are incorporating fake British accents into their daily conversations.

While there isn't one specific reason for this trend, for Gen Z, it often serves as a way to alleviate anxiety or navigate social conflicts.

Kyra Green, a 26-year-old, explained to *The Guardian* that using a British accent helped her stay calm when she lost her boarding pass just before a flight.

Similarly, Asher Lieberman, a 21-year-old college student, uses the accent as a "defence mechanism" to navigate awkward social situations, such as confronting his roommate or dealing with an uncomfortable date.

Call it the Gen Z version of keeping calm and carrying on, Amy Walker, an actor and dialect coach said, adding Brits had long been associated with keeping a stiff upper lip.

"We think of them as cerebral and not super emotional," she said.

"The voice can elevate something that feels a little too real in the moment."

MEANWHILE, guided anxiety journals are gaining popularity as people struggle to get their difficult mental moments out without a prompt to kick-start the process.

The guided journals now come with daily check-ins, safety/survival plans, how to identify triggers, a year-round mood tracker, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy questions, and more.

Vape ads need new push

A RMIT University expert says a successful anti-vaping campaign needs more than just plain packaging and scant flavour choice - it needs to pitch Big Tobacco as the enemy.

Dr Sandy Fitzgerald, Senior Lecturer, Marketing shared "while there are now policies and budgets in place to stem vaping for good reasons, we need to acknowledge, particularly for people under 25, that these interventions can be perceived as paternalistic, revenue-raising by the government and punitive in orientation.

"The government needs a different approach to their previous anti-smoking campaigns as this is a whole new generation they are targeting," stressed Fitzgerald.

"Firstly, we need to understand the perspective of vapers and why they try vaping in the first place.

"Young people do gain social capital from vaping and it may be socially rewarding for vapers (especially those under the age of 18), as they will be perceived as 'cool' and belonging to a self-selected in-group among their peers," Fitzgerald explained.

We also need to recognise that once a habit or addiction is established, it takes effort, the right support and social messaging to change, she said.

"A successful campaign must be communicative and make vapers feel that they are not singled out and made to feel that they are stupid or dumb just because they were curious to try vaping in the first place."

An anti-vaping campaign must also respect that the target audience are curious youngsters with full autonomy to choose and determine their future, she said.

"Anti-vaping campaigns need



to present a convincing value proposition for this age group to quit - that vaping robs you of your autonomy and turns you into a pawn," Fitzgerald commented.

"How would they feel if targeted information about Big Tobacco is presented to them - that they are simply pawns and are used and controlled by this industry?"

"Vapers (who we know are typically under 25) may find that information confronting and perhaps start questioning if they wish to be controlled and have their autonomy stripped away by Big Tobacco because they vape."

This idea of vaping robbing them of their freedom (once they are addicted) to a successful future (from a monetary perspective), will get them to question who they are vaping for, Fitzgerald suggested.

"Communicating the message in a school context could be effective by appointing student leaders (who peers look up to) as opinion leaders, to shift the perspective of how vaping takes away one's freedom."



Guild Update

Pharmacists 'worried sick'

LOCAL pharmacists are "worried sick" about the 60-day dispensing change confirmed in the federal budget last week.

The change, effective from Sep, doubles the amount of medicine a patient can receive at their community pharmacy.

Guild National President Trent Twomey said there was virtually no consultation with the Pharmacy Guild about the changes.

"And despite repeated requests, the Minister for Health Mark Butler has refused to provide assurance that no patient or pharmacy would be worse off as a result," Twomey said.

The Pharmacy Guild says the changes will on average cut between \$150,000 and \$170,000 from a local pharmacy's revenue.

"I have had pharmacists contacting me telling me they don't know how their practices will survive, under these changes.

"You might only need to go to the pharmacy once every two months under these changes, but what good is that if your local pharmacy is no longer there?"

Twomey said the budget had debunked promises by the government to reinvest any money stripped from community pharmacy back into the sector.

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