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## Guild has its say on merger review

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia is continuing to highlight its concerns about the proposed merger of Sigma and Chemist Warehouse to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) by responding to its Statement of Issues (PD 14 Jun).

The Guild expressed concerns that the reverse takeover of Sigma

by Chemist Warehouse could lead to higher prices, reduced service quality, and a decline in the world-class healthcare provided by Australia's community pharmacies.

Additionally, the Guild highlighted potential issues such as discriminatory or self-preferencing conduct by Chemist Warehouse, the risk of pharmacies

currently supplied by Sigma being foreclosed, and the use of the wholesaler's data assets to undermine the competitive position of other pharmacies.

Speaking to *Pharmacy Daily*, the ACCC confirmed that the proposed merger is undergoing an informal merger review.

This process aims to provide timely decisions on merger proposals, although the duration depends on the quality of information from the merger parties, the complexity of the acquisition, and the necessity of market inquiries, it stated.

The ACCC also informed that the review's findings, originally set for release on 05 Sep, have been postponed pending further information from Sigma and Chemist Warehouse.

"We are still waiting for more information from key parties Sigma and Chemist Warehouse, and a new date will eventually be provided," said an ACCC spokesperson. JG

### Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today features four pages of news, including our **Beauty & Wellness** feature, plus full pages from:

- **Pharmacium**
- **Wakey Wakey**

### Design your space

**PHARMACIUM** will create work spaces that reflect your working style and improve efficiencies throughout your pharmacy with a focus on dispensary operations.

See more on **page five**.

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**References:** 1. Grieve KA, Barnes TM. Increased bioavailability of hydrocortisone dissolved in a cream base. *Australas J Dermatol.* 2015; 56(2):e30–4. 2. Van Zuuren EJ, Fedorowicz Z, Christensen R, Lavrijsen APM, Arents BWM (2017) Emollients and moisturisers for eczema. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2017, Issue 2. Art. No.: CD012119. DOI: 10.1002/14651858. CD012119.pub2.

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## \$6.4m in funding

FOUR new projects led by Flinders University researchers to tackle the problems of sleep apnoea and gestational diabetes have been awarded \$6.4 million in funding in the latest round of the Medical Research Future Fund.

Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Timothy Cavagnaro said Flinders University continues to rapidly expand the scope and breadth of its health and medical research.

The researchers will work on three streams under the study called 'Optimising Screening Diagnosis and Management of Obstructive Sleep Apnoea'.

The second will look at the 'Impact of excess folic acid intake on the pathogenesis of Gestational Diabetes'.

## QScript's new exemptions

NEW exemptions for the mandatory QScript look-up requirements for relevant practitioners have come into effect in Queensland.

The changes aim to simplify the process for prescribing and dispensing monitored medicines in specific situations.

Practitioners such as pharmacists are now exempt from checking QScript in hospitals if the medicine is administered on-site.

Similar exemptions apply to patients treated at aged care facilities, custodial facilities, or in urgent emergency situations.

Additionally, exemptions extend to patients assessed as eligible under the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021*, such as those with a life expectancy of less than 12 months, or those receiving palliative care.



An exemption also applies when practitioners prescribe monitored medicines to be administered directly by an authorised person, such as a pharmacist or registered nurse, without the patient taking possession of the medicine.

Simultaneously, a new version of the *Monitored Medicines Standard* has been implemented.

This updated Standard has a narrower scope, applying exclusively to monitored medicine treatment for patients registered under the Queensland Opioid Treatment Program.

These changes are intended to enhance the efficiency and responsiveness of monitored medicine administration in various critical care scenarios. JG

## Free DFMO access

CHILDREN with a rare type of cancer will no longer need to spend up to \$500k to travel to the US for expensive treatment, as the Commonwealth will provide funding to state and territory governments to support them to administer the medicine to eligible patients, free of charge.

Administered through the Drug and Therapeutics Committees of major public hospitals, it will ensure that patients with high-risk neuroblastoma can obtain difluoromethylornithine (DFMO) without huge expense and overseas travel.

Around 20 patients are expected to benefit each year over the next two years.

The fully-funded scheme will begin as soon as the committees of the major public hospitals approve the administration of DFMO.

The funding aims to remove financial barriers while DFMO's compassionate access scheme application is under consideration by the TGA.

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## Editor's Choice: Australis launches first in affordable Aussie beauty

THE newest range from one of Australia's most well-known beauty brands, Australis Cosmetics, is sure to be a hit among budget- and eco-conscious make-up buyers.

The Refillable Lipsticks range offers three unique, durable lip cases that are designed to be reused, as well as 15 lux, lightweight satin shades.

Formulated to smooth and hydrate lips, the lipsticks are enriched with peptides, hyaluronic acid and moisturising jojoba seed oil.

The lipsticks can be refilled in three easy steps.

First, users can attach their favourite case to their lipstick and



then insert the lipstick bullet into the open end of the case.

Finally, press to secure and wait for the click.

The range is available now at

Priceline pharmacies, with both the lipsticks and the refillable cases retailing for \$14.95 each.

The new lipsticks are cruelty-free and completely vegan.

## Krumbled x CWH



**KRUMBLED** Foods has unveiled two delicious new flavours of its Beauty Bites online and in-store at Chemist Warehouse.

Australian owned and made, the brand describes the product as "Australia's first and fully functional beauty and gut health snack".

The collagen bars contain "illuminating and age-defying" ingredients including 3,800mg of hydrolysed collagen peptides, one billion CFUs [colony forming units] of probiotics combined with the prebiotics & vitamins C + E, in a convenient single daily dose.

The brand claims the grab-and-go snacks help promote glowing skin, healthy hair, stronger nails, and improved gut health.

The new flavours, white choc macadamia and peanut butter jelly, are in addition to the existing range, which includes white choc raspberry, salted caramel, choc hazelnut, and peanut butters.

Krumbled Beauty Bites retail for \$3.49 each.

## EZZ makes hair easy

THE latest addition to EZZ's Hair Growth Range, the EZZ Hair Protector is formulated to combat hair loss at its root.

The new supplement contains a potent herbal extract, which works to inhibit the production of the androgenic hormone DHT, regulate hormone balance, and activate dormant hair follicles for a fuller, healthier head of hair.

The EZZ Hair Protector is now available at Chemist Warehouse for RRP: \$45.95.



## Popular Korean skincare range arrives in Oz



**AHC**, Korea's number one aesthetic skincare brand, has brought its clinically-proven Niacin Biome range to Australia.

Available now exclusively at Priceline stores and online, the new range is designed to visibly reduce dark spots and brighten the skin, resulting in a radiant complexion.

AHC's Niacin Biome range uses 99% pure niacinamide, a renowned ingredient for its skin-brightening properties, as well as mela scissors enzyme and lucent biome.

Retailing from \$39, the range includes four products - a cleansing foam, toner, an emulsion, and an essence.

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## Dispensary Corner

**WE'VE** got plenty of smart tech already - Dubai even has wi-fi in its palm trees - but could your everyday clothes or work uniforms be getting smarter?

Researchers from universities in the UK cities of Bristol and Bath have flagged the prospect of 'smart clothes' that capture and record body movements more accurately than phones and smart watches currently do.

This technology could in turn be used to create garments that can improve personal exercise regimes, physiotherapy treatment and rehabilitation, gathering data throughout the day from your work uniforms.

Key to the e-clothes are harmless electrical voltages that pass through garment seams that create electrical circuits.

"We've shown that common overlapped seams in standard garment constructions can do a good job of sensing human body movement," said Professor Mike Fraser from the University of Bristol's School of Computer Science.

"The design avoids the need for a separate power source by pairing the seam with a charging coil, drawing the energy wirelessly from a mobile phone placed in the pocket."

Prof Fraser said smartphone apps utilising advanced AI can then be developed to match body movements to various positions and gestures such as physiotherapeutic exercises.

The research was presented last week at the Designing Interactive Systems Conference in Copenhagen.

## Directo's capital extension

**DIRECTO**, the B2B platform servicing the pharmacy sector supply chain, has extended its \$3 million capital raise deadline due to "strong interest" from many pharmacists who are keen to invest directly (**PD** 21 Jun).

Fully paid ordinary shares are being offered at \$3.26 per share, with the offer closing on 31 Jul.

The move allows pharmacists to take a financial stake in Directo, enabling them to contribute to and benefit from significant changes in the pharmacy sector.

Founder Gavin Upiter (**pictured**) said, "the Directo platform is designed for the pharmacy sector by industry experts".

"Our networked two-sided online marketplace integrates into pharmacy enterprise solutions and addresses the needs of retail pharmacies and their suppliers by reducing administrative time."

Directo aims to streamline the fragmented Australian pharmacy industry and is already serving TerryWhite Chemmart and Chempro.

It connects over 3,000 pharmacies with 180 suppliers, offering 30,000 multi-category products from brands such as McPherson's, Aero Healthcare, Nude by Nature, The



Joboba Company, Gibsons Eyewear, and Gibson Gifts.

"The digitised supply chain platform enhances processes by reducing costs, boosting efficiency, providing price transparency, and simplifying interactions," commented Upiter.

With 54% of Australian pharmacies already using the platform and revenue doubling in the past two years, the capital raise will support Directo's growth and fund the integration of advanced AI for task management, phone, and analytics tools.

This technological upgrade aims to enhance user experience, streamline operations, and drive further adoption of the platform. **JG**  
To register interest, **CLICK HERE**.

## \$100m in funding

**THE** Federal Government will invest \$100 million into 33 Indigenous health infrastructure projects around the country.

Minister for Indigenous Australians Linda Burney, Assistant Minister Malarndirri McCarthy, and Coalition of the Peaks Lead Convener Pat Turner announced the funding at the Joint Council meeting in Adelaide last Fri.

The investment will fund the construction of new healthcare clinics, the renovation of existing ones, and the building of staff housing.

The Health Dept stated many current Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) facilities, some 20 to 40 years old, are in dire need of repair or replacement.

Improved clinics and safer housing aim to make working in ACCHS more appealing to health professionals.

The grant opportunity was co-designed with the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation to address the sector's needs.

This funding follows previous investments, including \$120 million for 52 projects announced in Dec 2022 and \$15 million for 10 projects announced in May last year.



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### ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

**Head of Sales & Marketing** - Sean Harrigan

**Advertising** - Laura Aghajanian &

Dante Muranty

[advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au)

**Head of Operations &**

**Contributing Editor** - Anna Piper

### ACCOUNTS

[accounts@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:accounts@traveldaily.com.au)

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd  
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia  
Tel: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760)

[info@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:info@pharmacydaily.com.au)

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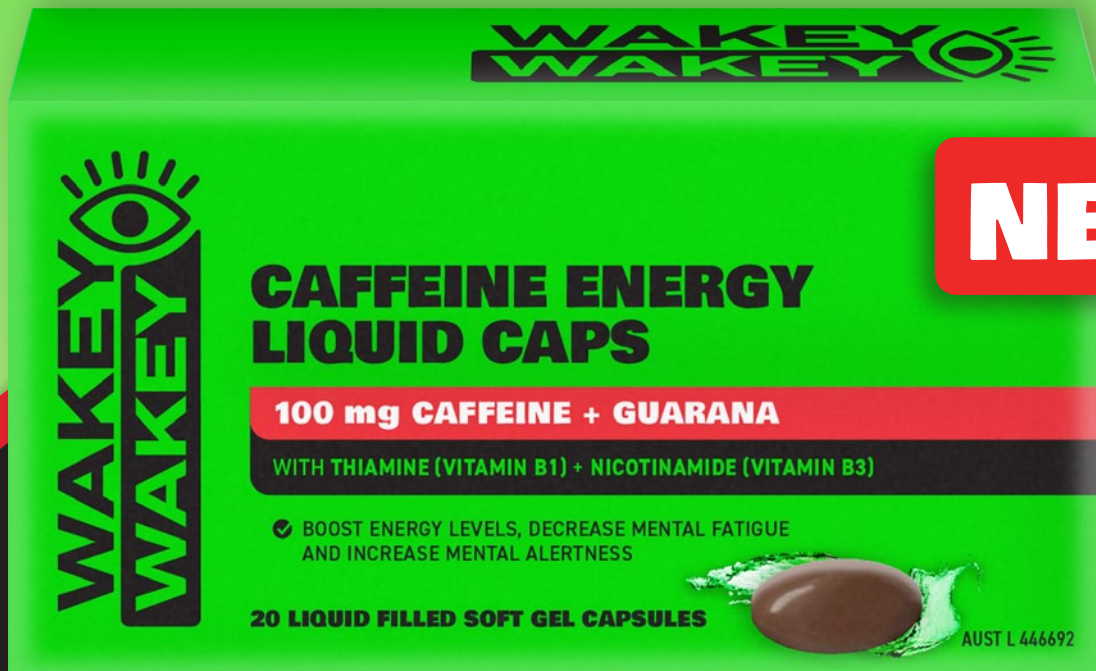
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