

## Inter professional Communication

Overcoming Psychological Barriers

**Event details:**

Liverpool..... 1 May  
 Illawarra..... 5 June  
 Coffs Harbour..... 17 July  
 Penrith..... 24 July  
 Newcastle..... 18 Sept  
 Albury..... 23 Oct  
 Tweed Heads..... 13 Nov

**10 Group 2 CPD credits**

**Register at:**  
[www.psa.org.au](http://www.psa.org.au)

### New PBS approvals

**HEALTH** minister Nicola Roxon this morning approved new PBS listings/extensions for ten medications, including the approval of cancer treatment **Erbitux** (cetuximab), after its manufacturer agreed to pay for required 'co-dependent' genetic testing.

Roxon said that it's the first time any government has listed a medicine on the PBS while also attempting to achieve Medicare listing of the genetic test.

Also listed is **Gilenya** (fingolimod) which is the first oral treatment for multiple sclerosis, with Roxon saying today's announcement "reaffirms the Government's commitment to list drugs on the PBS that treat serious conditions where alternative treatments are not already available".

Other approvals today include **Diflucan** (fluconazole), **Glivec** (imatinib), **Neulasta** (pegfilgrastim), **Tobi** (tobramycin), **Fragmin** (dalteparin sodium), **Revolade** (eltrombopag), **Ferro Tab** (ferrous fumarate), **Fluanxol** (flupenthicol) and **Clopixol** (zuclopenthixol), **Risperdol Consta** (risperidone) and **Duodart** (duasteride with tamsulosin hydrochloride).

The Govt has also agreed to increase the price of three currently listed medicines - **Kaluril** (amiloride hydrochloride tablet), **Hygroton** (chlorthalidone) and **Betamin** (thiamine hydrochloride), while the new 60mg vial size of **Herceptin** has also been listed under the Medicare-run late-stage Herceptin program.

Seasonal influenza vaccine **Fluarix** will also be added to the National Immunisation Program, Roxon said.

### ANZTPA back on agenda

**YESTERDAY** the Prime Ministers of Australia and New Zealand agreed to proceed with previously ditched plans for the regulation of therapeutic products across both countries.

The groundbreaking move will "safeguard public health and safety, while encouraging economic integration and benefiting industry in both countries," according to a Health Dept statement.

Over time, the joint arrangements will be administered by a single regulatory agency, dubbed the Australia New Zealand Therapeutic Products Agency which will "absorb" both the TGA and New Zealand's Medsafe.

The plan envisages an approach in three stages over five years, with the first move - effective from next month - being a program of work-sharing and increased joint operations between the agencies.

Building on this, a single entry point for industry will be established along with a common trans-Tasman regulatory framework.

"During these two preliminary phases, each country will retain its own regulator and continue to make its own regulatory decisions, but business will benefit from a significant reduction in red tape," according to the statement.

The third and final stage will see the establishment of the single regulator following a series of reviews of the new system.

A Transition Agency will be established to oversee the changes, and will advise a select Ministerial Council on the joint scheme.

Previous agreement to set up the ANZTPA eventually foundered because New Zealand wasn't able to pass enabling legislation, with the stumbling block being regulation of complementary medicines.

The new push for the joint agency has been enabled because last week NZ announced a separate framework for domestic regulation of low-risk CMs.

NZ natural health product makers will be able to choose to be integrated into ANZTPA regulation which would allow them to market their products internationally, including in Australia.

Until a common regulatory framework is agreed, all therapeutic goods to be supplied into the Australian market will still need to meet Australian standards.

**MEANWHILE** the Complementary Healthcare Council has welcomed the move, saying it paves the way for a similar independent regime for the regulation of complementary medicines in Australia.

CHC executive director Wendy Morrow said Australian consumers have less access to CMs because of the different regulations, with Australia the only country which regulates these products as medicines.

**AND** Generic Medicines Industry Council ceo Kate Lynch warned that the establishment of the new joint agency "must not impede the important regulatory reform that is already underway for prescription medicines in Australia" - nor add any unnecessary administrative or financial burdens on the industry.

### Over 900 sign petition

**MORE** than 900 people have now added their names to the online petition against the addition of pharmacy to the Department of Immigration's Skilled Occupations List (**PD** yesterday).

National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association national president, Ashleigh Coome, has pointed out that while the petition was created by a NAPSA member, the organisation itself does not endorse it.

### Roxon wants corresponding savings

**FUTURE** PBS listings will only be achieved by "sensible savings to the health budget," according to Health Minister Nicola Roxon.

When announcing today's new listings (see story p1), Roxon said that proposed changes to the Private Health Insurance Rebate and the Chronic Disease Dental Scheme.

However the proposed means testing on the Private Health Insurance rebate will not come into effect on 01 July, after it was defeated in the Senate twice.

Despite this, Roxon pledged to press on with the changes which will release "over \$100 billion over the next forty years to invest within the health portfolio, including on new PBS listings.

"Cabinet will continue to consider all new PBS drug listings and how these listings compare with other health spending priorities such as training new doctors and nurses, opening new hospital beds and investing in new preventative health programs," she added.

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## Guild Update

This week's update from the  
Pharmacy Guild

### Pick up CPD points at Pharmacy Women's Congress

In order to assist pharmacists to maintain their professional competency and earn CPD credits, this year's Pharmacy Women's Congress will feature pre- and post-Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions as well as the usual congress sessions.

The sessions will be offered on Friday 15 July and Sunday 17 July.

Combined with the congress sessions they will attract over 17 CPD credits, allowing attendees to earn valuable CPD points before the 30 September deadline.

CPD sessions are also open to non-congress delegates for an additional fee.

Session topics include current trends in dispensary errors, wound care in pharmacy practice, skin cancer identification and primary prevention, and performance management of staff.

The congress program includes a mix of educational, professional, motivational and comedic sessions including a keynote address by CEO of the newly founded Australian Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AWCCI) Yolanda Vega, a panel session on how to include board work in your career, and a case study on mentoring by pharmacy icon Rhonda White.

The Pharmacy Women's Congress runs from 15-17 July in Cairns.

For more information or to download a registration form see [pharmacywomenscongress.com.au](http://pharmacywomenscongress.com.au)



The Pharmacy  
Guild of Australia

## New heart drug approved

ASTRAZENECA yesterday announced the TGA approval of its Brilinta (ticagrelor), which is a new type of oral anti-platelet medication to treat patients with Acute Coronary Syndromes (ACS).

The drug is in a new class called cyclopentyltriazolopyrimidines (CPTPs), and is the first treatment to demonstrate significant mortality and morbidity benefits over clopidogrel, which is currently the most commonly used oral anti-platelet treatment.

The approval follows data from the PLATO study of more than 18,000 patients worldwide (including 82 from Australia) which showed a 21% reduced risk of cardiovascular death in those with heart attacks and unstable angina.

At a briefing yesterday, PLATO lead clinical investigator Professor Philip Aylward from Flinders Medical Centre described Brilinta as a significant breakthrough, because the medication has been shown to be effective across all ACS patients -

regardless of the type of heart attack and how they have been treated (stent, bypass or drugs).

Risk reduction occurred regardless of age, weight, gender, medical history or initial diagnosis, and there was also no significant increase in major or life-threatening bleeding compared to clopidogrel.

One side effect was shortness of breath but in most patients this was easily tolerated, with Prof Aylward saying the new medication "will change practice in Australia".

AstraZeneca medical director Dr Simon Fisher said the cost-effectiveness of Brilinta was "within the boundaries of many other drugs currently listed on the PBS.

"We're confident that PBS listing will be achieved," he added.

Pricing and availability for Brilinta in Australia hasn't yet been finalised at this stage.

Brilinta is already registered in 34 countries including nations in the EU (under the name Brilique) and Canada, while FDA approval is pending.

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## DISPENSARY CORNER

### HEALTH food?

An ice creamery in Columbia, Missouri in the USA has been attracting attention this week with its unique new flavour.

As well as strawberry, vanilla and chocolate, the outlet is making the most of a summer plague of cicadas by creating special new insect ice-cream.

According to the company, cicada corpses taste sort of like nuts, once they've been boiled and coated in chocolate.

Unsurprisingly the state Health Department has since ordered the bug-flavoured confectionery to be withdrawn from sale.

IT had to happen sometime.

A medical manufacturer in the UK has received approval for a new erection-boosting condom.

The condom contains gel which dilates the arteries and increases blood flow, and has been approved after a clinical trial which found a significant number of users preferred it over a standard condom.

The CSD500 from Futura Medical has licensed the upstanding new product to pharmaceutical firm Reckitt Benckiser, which will market it under the popular Durex brand.

**NORWEGIAN** patients who need a break from stress but can't afford a holiday are being urged to tune into a live broadcast from a cruise ship as it winds its way along the country's scenic fjords.

Public TV in Norway is currently screening the five day Hurtigruten cruise aboard *MMS Nordnorge* in real-time, allowing viewers to share the experience with the 670 passengers on board.

Reuters reports that the "minute-by-minute" coverage started last Friday, with the show including views from 11 cameras around the ship.

Initial viewing data is positive, with about a third of Norway's population tuning in for at least part of the relaxing broadcast.

## WIN A PURE SPA PACK



Every day this week **PD** is giving one lucky reader the chance to win an Pure Spa® pack, courtesy of **Pure Spa**.

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Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Alexandra Daskal** from **Varsity Pharmacy, NSW**.