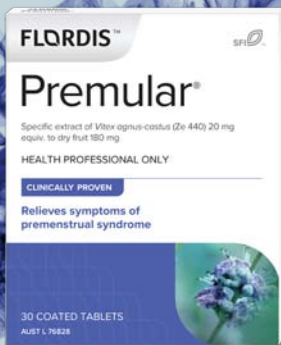
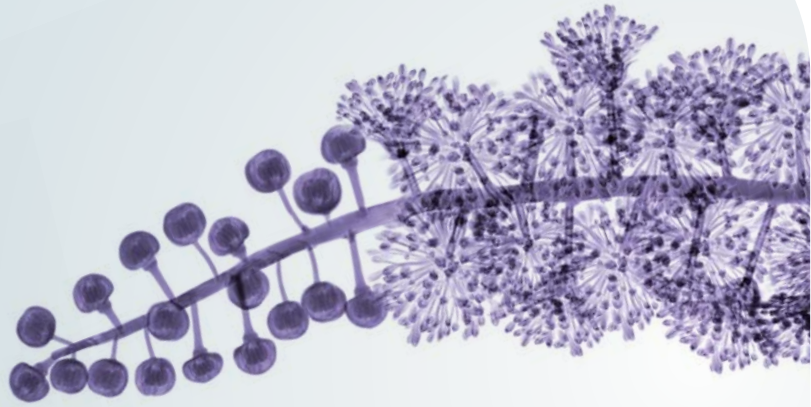


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## Mild hot flashes or night sweats? Recommend the Femular® difference

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## Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today features two pages of news, plus a front cover page from Floridis.

## Vax trial paused

GLOBAL trials of the University of Oxford's COVID-19 vaccine are being paused after a participant became unwell with an "unexplained illness".

A spokesperson for AstraZeneca told *Pharmacy Daily* that the company had voluntarily paused the trial to allow an independent committee to review safety data.

"This is a routine action which has to happen whenever there is a potentially unexplained illness in one of the trials, while it is investigated, ensuring we can maintain the integrity of the trials," the spokesperson said.

# COVID HMS funding extension sought

PHARMACY owners are calling on the Federal Government to extend its funding for the Home Medicines Service (HMS) announced as part of the initial \$2.4 billion COVID-19 health package (*PD* 12 Mar).

In a video update Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, told members that the funding to deliver medicines to patients' homes is currently due to expire at the end of this month.

"We have written to the Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, and Treasurer, Josh Frydenburg, seeking an extension of that home delivery service due to the circumstances that we're currently in," he said.

"We're hopeful that we will have some success there, at least for Victoria, but we will keep members updated.

"In the meantime the program is due to run out at the end of Sep.

"Please continue to claim the home delivery payment - it's \$7.77



for each eligible patient that's payable once a month."

At a Victorian level, Tassone said emergency orders enabling continued dispensing and dispensing using a digital image, which are due to expire in the coming weeks, are expected to be extended by the State Government.

"These Public Health Emergency Orders are currently due to expire on 27 Sep [for emergency supply of prescription medicines] and 06 Oct [for dispensing using a digital

image]," he said.

"Now the Victorian Department of Human Services is likely to extend these emergency orders by another six months, [and] that announcement should be coming pretty soon."

Tassone also noted that changes to the JobKeeper program have been announced, and urged pharmacy owners to contact the Guild's Workplace Relations team if they have any questions regarding the scheme.

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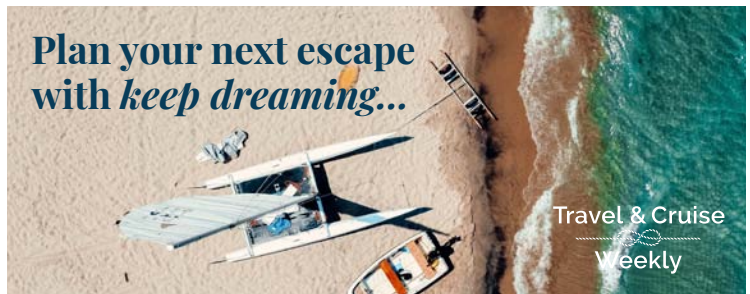
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## Dispensary Corner

**THERE** have been calls to improve consistency of COVID-19 health regulations in Queensland, after an event organiser noted that dancing at weddings is currently banned - but sex parties are allowed.

The issue was highlighted by wedding singer, Nik Edser, who said "we have had so many bookings cancelled because of the dancing rules".

"The irony is if I was invited to a wedding this weekend to attend with my wife and I wanted to dance with her there, then I wouldn't be allowed to.

"But if we decided to go to a sex club and swap partners with some people who we don't know where they're from or who they really are, that's OK," Edser was quoted by the ABC as saying this week.

Currently the Queensland adult entertainment industry is allowed to continue operating under a State Government COVID Safe Industry Plan for Sex on Premises Venues and Adult Parties which stipulates strategies such as record-keeping and contact tracing.

By contrast, gatherings in homes or public spaces are restricted to just 10 people in the Brisbane metropolitan area and the Gold Coast, and a maximum of 30 elsewhere.

A Queensland Health spokesperson was quoted as saying the state's COVID Safe Plans are "our best system to balance the health response necessary to keep our community safe with keeping life as normal as possible".

## Pharmacies will face tough decisions

**PHARMACY** owners are likely to face difficult choices, including possibly closing their businesses in the coming months as the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and recession hit, Pharmacy Guild of Australia NSW Branch President, David Heffernan, believes.

Heffernan told *Pharmacy Daily* that many businesses were "hanging on" with JobKeeper, noting pharmacies in CBD, large shopping centres and airports, have been "hit hard" as a result of diminished foot traffic caused by the pandemic and associated lockdowns.

"The big issue with a small business is you sign leases - you don't own the building," he said.

"COVID has created a lot of changes, but the terms of your leases don't shift."

He said efforts by some pharmacy owners have seen landlords respond to requests to negotiate leases by saying they have to manage their costs just as



pharmacies have been.

With JobKeeper set to run until Mar 2021, Heffernan described it as a "band-aid solution", saying in the coming months "people will have to make difficult decisions and many will be looking at closing down".

Speaking with *Nine Entertainment* publications, Pharmacy4Less CEO, and NSW Guild Branch Vice President Finance, Feras Karem, said the impact of COVID on a number of the group's stores in Sydney, Chatswood and Parramatta

has been "devastating".

"We pay a high rent to be in high footfall areas and the footfall has disappeared," he said.

**MEANWHILE**, Heffernan urged pharmacists who are struggling with the anxiety and stress of the COVID crisis to "reach out to a friend" or contact the Pharmacists' Support Service.

"This is the time for people to band together," he said.

"There's been a lot of natural anguish in relation to this."

### Price focused on General Practice

**INCOMING** Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) President, Dr Karen Price, has pledged to "hit the ground running" when she steps into the role on 30 Nov.

Following her election win, Price said she would "reassert the role of general practice and adopt a 'GPs first' approach when meeting with the nation's health leaders", adding GPs had been underfunded and underestimated for too long.

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