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One week 'til APP

THE Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference (APP) will get underway next week with an information-packed program featuring more than 60 sessions.

Check out the program [HERE](#).

API pledges to deliver

COMMUNITY Service Obligation (CSO) wholesaler, Australian Pharmaceutical Industries (API) is conducting a review of its processes following complaints that pharmacies in flood-affected areas have been left without stock, due to delivery delays.

API CEO, Richard Vincent, announced the company was investigating its performance during the flood crisis, after Casino-based pharmacy owner, John Black, reported that stores in the area had experienced issues receiving stock from API over the last two weeks, despite roads into the town being open since 02 Mar (PD 15 Mar).

"We are absolutely committed to doing everything possible to meet our community service obligation and we've got a long and proud track record of doing so through various bushfires and flood emergencies," Vincent said.

"Clearly this has been a very challenging time for everyone

in flood-impacted areas and our hearts go out to them.

"We are conducting a thorough review to ensure, if there are lessons to be learnt that would have seen a quicker resumption of deliveries, [and] we'll take the appropriate action to help ensure that it doesn't happen again."

MEANWHILE, API will host a virtual meeting of shareholders tomorrow to "consider and if thought fit, pass" a resolution to approve a scheme of arrangement that would see retail conglomerate, Wesfarmers, acquire all remaining shares in the wholesaler.

Should the scheme be approved Wesfarmers is scheduled to complete its acquisition of API on 31 Mar.

Today's issue of PD
Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news, plus a full page from Good Price Pharmacy Warehouse.

Step up a level

GOOD Price Pharmacy Warehouse is offering pharmacy owners support to take their businesses to the next level with its franchise models.

See **page five** for more.



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Cheap beer not a vote winner: Guild

POLITICIANS are being urged to resist calls to cut excise duty on alcohol and focus on slashing the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) general co-payment instead.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, said lobbying for cheaper beer by the Australian Hotels Association would not be a vote winner for candidates ahead of this year's Federal election.

"I know that if I asked my patients if they would prefer the cost of beer or the cost of medicines to be cut, they would say cut the cost of medicines," he said.

"Medicines remain unaffordable for so many Australians and our research shows women are particularly hard hit.

"The hip pocket issues which affect women are relevant not just to them but to their entire household.

"Health costs are a first order cost-of-living issue for women.

"A quarter of women in middle income households without a concession card have struggled to afford prescription medicines over the past three years.

"And 13% of people without concession cards have had to skip prescribed medicines.

"This budget must address what is a damning situation in Australia today.

"People are struggling to afford essentials and going without their medicines should never be a decision Australians have to make."

Speaking during a Guild webinar earlier this month, Twomey noted that the organisation's research had found one-in-five Australians were struggling to afford to buy essential medicines.

Building a profile of the people most likely to flag concerns about the cost of medicines, Twomey said they were predominantly female, aged 35 to 54 years and a low-to-middle income earner.



"She is often caring up and she is often caring down," he said.

"And most importantly for our elected officials, she is a soft voter - she is not somebody that is rusted-on Liberal, or rusted-on Labor.

"Her vote is up for grabs.

"What she's looking for is not only equal opportunity, but something to help with the cost of living - not just fuel, rent and stagnant wages - she's also looking towards a government or prospective government to have a vision for our healthcare system beyond the pandemic."

Hard to swallow

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is highlighting the medication safety risks faced by patients with dysphagia, to mark Swallowing Awareness Day today.

SHPA CEO, Kristen Michaels, said pharmacists had a key role to play in helping raise awareness about the condition which causes problems for patients swallowing, drinking, chewing, controlling saliva and taking medicines.

"This is particularly important to pharmacists as it presents an ideal opportunity to ask their customers and patients if they are having trouble swallowing their medicines," she said.

"Not only can this avoid the risk of medicine-related harm, but it can also lead to proper diagnosis and treatment of a swallowing disorder."

SHPA honours WA COVAX leader

WESTERN Australian pharmacist, Kerry Fitzsimons, has been awarded the 2021 Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) Medal of Merit, for her leadership and contribution to medicines safety in the state.

Announcing Fitzsimons' award win, SHPA Director, Deirdre Criddle, noted that she played a key role in WA's COVID-19 vaccination (COVAX) rollout, leading the State Health Incident Control Centre vaccine preparation process, while also forging new opportunities for hospital pharmacists.

"It quickly became apparent she

was the perfect choice [to lead the COVAX efforts]," Criddle said.

"Her leadership and preparedness to speak up for safety have been vital to her success, and Kerry continues to underscore the value of pharmacists in these strategic positions.

"Her work to ensure opportunities to expand their horizons beyond traditional hospital career paths is something that the profession should not underestimate."

Fitzsimons will formally receive the SHPA Medal of Merit at the SHPA National Conference later this year.

Priceline lands Aniston's Vital Proteins

PRICELINE Pharmacy has secured exclusive rights to distribute leading US collagen supplement brand, Vital Proteins, in Australia.

The deal will see five Vital Proteins products hit the shelves of Priceline stores and the group's online retail platform, including flavoured collagen creamers and peptides powders.

The US product is backed by *Friends* star, Jennifer Aniston (pictured), who has joined the business as its Chief Creative Officer, providing her views on new product innovations and overall brand strategy.

Aniston said she has been using



Vital Proteins regularly for the last five years.

"Collagen is the glue that holds everything together," she said.

"I've always been an advocate for nourishing your wellness from within, which is why I started using Vital Proteins so many years ago."

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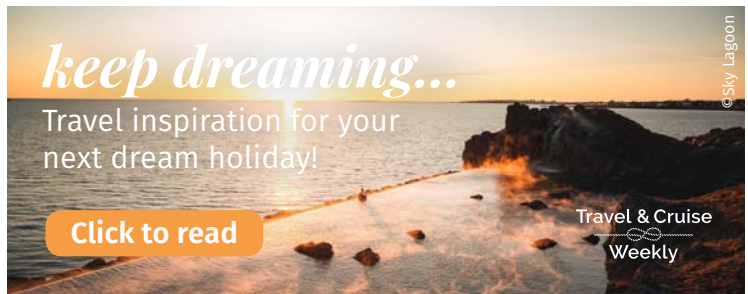


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Travel & Cruise Weekly

TGA webinar

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is inviting interested parties to take part in a webinar covering proposed updated evidence guidelines for listed medicines.

The session is part of a consultation which launched earlier this month and closes on 01 Apr, with the webinar to be presented by the TGA's Diane Wilkinson & Jenny Cheng.

The proposed updated guidelines aim to enhance their readability and utility, clarify how the TGA interprets and analyses the different types of evidence, and clarify some technical concepts which are unclear or problematic in the existing guidelines.

For more info on attending the webinar **CLICK HERE**.

SA Labor makes 24hr pharmacy push

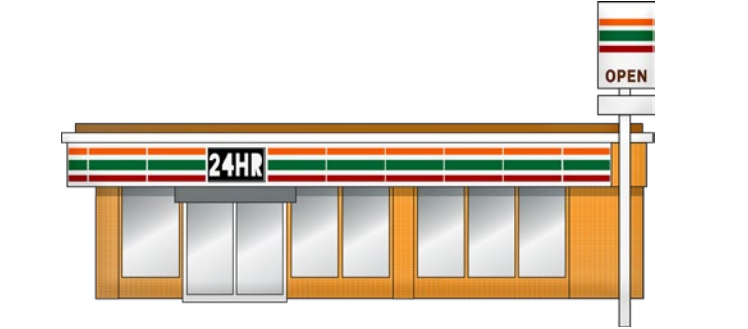
SOUTH Australian Labor Party Leader, Peter Malinauskis, will back moves to approve more 24-hour pharmacies in Adelaide, if elected in the State election this weekend.

In a statement posted on LinkedIn yesterday, Malinauskis said the COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the need for greater access to pharmacy services.

"Like most parents, I've had my fair share of those nights - it's 2am, you've got a screaming child in your arms, and you're searching around in a panic for kids' Panadol to get their fever under control," he said.

"That's why Labor will support three 24/7 pharmacies across Adelaide, so people can get medication and advice around the clock.

"This is a really pragmatic, simple thing we can do to provide peace



of mind for families - and it'll help ease the pressure on our [hospital] emergency departments, where people often end up as a last resort. "It's all part of our plan to fix the crisis in our health system, and every bit counts."

Malinauskis has also pledged to increase funding for the State's health system, by abandoning plans for a \$662 million basketball

stadium. "At a time when ambulance ramping has been the worst we have ever seen and our emergency departments are some of the worst performing in the country, building a new basketball stadium is simply not the right priority," he said. "I believe that the health of all South Australians should be a priority."

Pharmacist singled out as life-saver

US-BASED pharmacist, Dr Jabeen Ahmed's tireless efforts to support her local community during the COVID-19 pandemic, have been rewarded with the mayor of Paterson, New Jersey, presenting her with the key to the city last week.

Ahmed was honoured for going to the homes of patients who had COVID-19 to test family members and administer vaccinations.

Accepting the accolade, Ahmed said that health workers "have to remain steady and steer the ship in the midst of a storm".



With Paterson recording the highest vaccination rate in New Jersey, city Mayor, Andre Sayegh, praised local health workers for their role in driving uptake of the vaccines, *CBS News* reported.

Price Disclosure details for 01 Apr out

CONFIRMED 01 Apr 2022 price reductions for items on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme resulting from the 2022 Apr Cycle of Price Disclosure have now been published by the Department of Health.

The outcome of the "twelfth remove originator cycle" includes reductions ranging from 10% through to 77% on Approved Ex-Manufacturer price levels

The biggest cut in percentage terms is for alendronic acid with colecalciferol and calcium, with a pack of four tablets dropping from \$10.92 to \$2.45.



Other cuts include a 48% reduction in the ex-manufacture price of Pegfilgrastim injection 6mg in 0.6mL single-use pre-filled syringe, which becomes \$178.18, down from \$346.39, while Flouracil injections in various strengths also are having their ex-manufacturer prices cut by about 32%.

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Dispensary Corner

THERE'S been a major shift in family planning policies in Belgium, where authorities are putting flocks of local pigeons on the contraceptive pill.

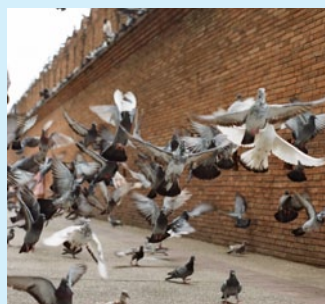
Brussels is plagued by tonnes of corrosive pigeon poo, but rather than taking more extreme measures like a cull, the city's management has decided to simply reduce the fertility of the local avian population, according to a report in the UK *Telegraph*.

The move follows a trial in a particular city square where it was found that distributing contraceptive-laced corn pellets had halved the numbers of so-called "flying rats" over a 10-month period.

The drugged delights are treated with an anti-parasitic called R12 which also prevents eggs from developing.

It's estimated that each bird poos about 12kg of guano each year, resulting in about \$25 of clean-up and repair costs per pigeon.

The introduction of the contraceptive program follows the passage of laws in Belgium last month which made it illegal for frustrated locals to catch and kill the birds.



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