



## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus full pages from WholeLife Pharmacy and Guild APP.

## Two weeks to go

PHARMACY'S largest conference is just two weeks away.

To read all about the many sponsors and sessions for the Australian Pharmacy Professionals Conference 2023, see [page five](#).

## TGA raid to seize

THE TGA has seized more than 55k of potentially dangerous products with the assistance of NSW Police.

On 22 Feb the TGA, with the assistance of NSW Police, executed three search warrants connected to an individual operating in the Newcastle area.

The warrants were conducted as part of an investigation into the alleged importation, advertising and supply of unapproved medicines.

Products suspected of containing alkyl nitrite, commonly known as 'poppers' and unapproved prescription medicines for erectile dysfunction were seized together with documents, packaging and advertising materials.

The seized products are prescription medicines that were allegedly not included on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods and, therefore, cannot be legally supplied in Australia.

## Look past 'sexism' to rise

**WOMEN** make up 62% of the total number of registered pharmacists but this falls to 34% for pharmacy leadership positions and Boards, according to a [study](#) published in the *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*.

A pharmacist for 25 years, Andria Aird ([pictured](#)) was appointed recently to her first Board role, as a Director for Blooms The Chemist.

While there are challenges to being a leader or director in the pharmacy profession, Aird is a firm believer in "looking past the sexism" and trusting yourself in order to climb the corporate ladder in pharmacy.

"There are now better opportunities for women in the pharmacy sector, and it's more acceptable for women to be ambitious," said Aird.

"I have always let my abilities speak for themselves and been confident in what I know."

Aird believes there should be more acknowledgement of the benefits of being a woman in the pharmacy field.

"As a mother and a pharmacist-owner for example, I have had to balance family with a career, and what I have found is that there aren't too many professions that offer the same flexibility as pharmacy."

However, she does believe that to achieve leadership roles what's non-negotiable is "being passionate about what you do," as well as always keeping in mind why you wanted to become a pharmacist in the first place - to help people.

Other criteria include keeping abreast of changes and trends in the industry with general and Pharmacy Guild news and staying updated on legislative changes.

Aird also advocates working in



another country where possible, to help facilitate your leadership aspirations, such as when she worked for the Boots Group in London.

"That gave me exposure to different opportunities within pharmacy at a more corporate level and to pharmacy groups and operations."

Aird also worked for the Pharmacy Guild of Western Australia and said, "it was a really good sideways step into how lobbying and politics affect what we do every day".

Aird is excited for the future saying "it's a good place for women who want to build their own future, be a business owner, a leader, as it allows you to be entrepreneurial and think outside of the box".

## Gloves are off

**AN AUSTRALIAN** disability advocate has called out political leaders for their selective blindness when it comes to the disability sector.

More than 6,000 people flocked to Brisbane over the weekend for the largest disability and NDIS-related event in the nation's history, and not one of the three levels of government could manage to send along one person for one hour of one day to say 'g'day', said the Director of Developing Australian Communities River Night.

"The Disability Connection Expo brought together more than 250 service providers under one roof over 03-04 Mar.

"This is purely the sector showing up for the sector, and frankly governments need to take their blinkers off," he said.

"Community awareness is what drives funding decisions and public policy.

"Without our elected leaders' support, these milestone events occur inside a silo and serious and ongoing issues remain swept under the latest touring star's red carpet."



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## Women in pain

**THERE** is a significant variation in the care women with acute chest pain receive compared to men, according to Australian research.

Further strategies to reduce these differences should be strongly considered by doctors and policymakers, said the study's researchers from the Monash University, Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute, and The Alfred Hospital.

The study looked at people who needed emergency services for acute chest pain in Victoria over 4.5 years and found that women were less likely to get care that followed guidelines in both pre-hospital and hospital settings.

Similarly, women with an acute coronary syndrome were less likely to undergo angiography or be admitted to a cardiac or intensive care unit.

It also found that mortality was higher for women diagnosed with ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction but lower overall.

Learn more [HERE](#).

## Guild clarification

**PHARMACISTS** must begin removing cough medicine products containing pholcodine from today following a TGA product recall.

When issuing the cancellation of pholcodine, the TGA ordered its removal from shelves to begin "as soon as possible" but "no later" than 08 Mar.

It also told the Pharmacy Guild that, "all pholcodine-containing medicines will be removed from the ARTG on 29 Mar and, therefore, all supply of goods and advertising must cease before the cancellation takes effect".

## Feedback for standards

**THE** Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) has commenced public consultation for the development of the Accreditation Standards for prescriber education programs.

The consultation is open to all stakeholders and interested people, APC said.

The feedback APC receives will inform the development of the new standards.

To ensure a wide range of responses, APC is gathering feedback through various methods including an online survey, in person or virtually at their stakeholder consultation forum, in writing, and during one-on-one interviews.

"We aim to create opportunities for people to provide feedback in ways that will suit them," said Acting CEO, Glenys Wilkinson.



"We encourage people to respond including those within the profession, other health professions, consumers, patients and communities."

The first round of consultation is now open.

It closes at midnight Mon 10 Apr.

To contribute or learn more about the project, see Accreditation Standards for pharmacist prescriber education programs [HERE](#).

## SANE slams Govt on Robodebt anguish

**THE** national organisation that advocates for Australians living with complex mental health needs, SANE, has stressed that it must be recognised that Robodebt targeted the most vulnerable group of Australians.

Thousands of people got caught by the Robodebt scheme "who in many cases would not have had the executive function to understand the situation or manage the enormous administrative burden associated with clearing their name.

"Through the SANE community, we've heard from many about the profound impact of the scheme - the distress they experienced when harassed for money that they simply weren't able to repay, the frustration and helplessness at being stuck in a

hellish bureaucratic loop of being unable to prove their innocence, and the fear of having their already limited benefits reduced or removed.

"The Government must seek alternatives to managing this administrative burden and recognise that even a small amount of debt has a huge impact on a community that often struggles to even find housing or afford the basics of food and utilities.

"It's our hope that the Royal Commission puts the political debate to one side and places people with lived experience at the centre of departments and at Centrelink to ensure that this type of harmful and truly tragic failure of public policy never occurs again," SANE stressed.

## Digital grants

**MEDIBANK** and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) have together launched a \$250k grant to fund research into digital health in primary care.

Through the Medibank Better Health Foundation and the RACGP Foundation, the grant will fund up to two projects focusing on either patients' experience with digital health in general practice, digital health integration in Australia, or high-quality digital support tools for clinical decision-making.

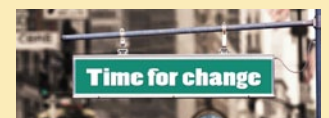
Medibank Medical Director - Research, Policy & Innovation Dr Jessica Choong welcomes the opportunity to partner with the RACGP to support better health outcomes.

"Technology is bringing about huge changes to the health landscape in Australia.

"The more we can understand the potential opportunities and barriers, the better the experience will be for patients and those who care for them."

RACGP President Dr Nicole Higgins said: "Our grants program has been running for over 60 years and has a high success rate for recipients receiving further funding to take their ideas and solutions forward.

"Research by GPs is essential to progress and improve general practice for the benefit of patients across Australia, and around the world".



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### Dispensary Corner

**THERE** are many occasions when an extra pair of arms would come in, well, handy, whether it is managing child care, operating on a patient, or cooking a Sunday dinner.

“If you want an extra arm while you’re cooking in the kitchen so you can stir the soup while chopping the vegetables, you might have the option to wear and independently control an extra robotic arm,” said Tamar Makin, a professor of cognitive neuroscience at the MRC cognition and brain unit at Cambridge University, who added that the approach could increase productivity.

Researchers say such human augmentation could be on the horizon, suggesting additional robotic body parts could be designed to boost our capabilities.

The approach has precedence: Dani Clode, a designer and colleague of Makin’s at Cambridge University, has created a 3D-printed thumb that can be added to any hand.

Clode discussed the device as part of a panel on ‘Homo cyberneticus: motor augmentation for the future body’, at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Washington DC, last week.

Makin said the extra thumb could be helpful for waiters holding plates, or for electrical engineers when soldering.

An extra arm could help a builder hammer a nail while holding a joist in place, reported *The Guardian*.

## PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

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