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## NAPSA will fight on for Prac payments

### EXCLUSIVE

**THE** National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association's (NAPSA) new President, Sebastian Harper, (PD breaking news) has committed to continue working with the Federal Government to secure changes to the Commonwealth Prac Payments (PD 13 May).

"NAPSA is now having constructive conversations with the government," Harper told *Pharmacy Daily*.

"We are moving in the right direction, and we hope to have some exciting news for our members soon."

He mentioned either way, NAPSA "won't stop fighting" for pharmacy and allied health students until it gets its members' support during this cost-of-living crisis.

"Change in this country is always hard-won, so I'm sure it will continue to be an uphill battle to get results."

"But being one of very few national health student bodies, emboldened by our unique network of branches and unprecedented support from the industry, I'm confident we can overcome any challenges that come our way," Harper added.

Further, two announcements were made by NAPSA to demonstrate its commitment to First Nations members and patients, as the first day of the new term coincided with the start of the NAIDOC Week on Sun.

The role of Rural and Indigenous Health Chair will now be an identifying position, requiring

candidates to either identify as First Nations or have a background from or live in a rural or remote area.

Additionally, NAPSA wants to establish an Indigenous Health Student Network to support the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, across all health disciplines, to promote self-determination.

"Outside of NAIDOC Week, NAPSA will always advocate for our First Nations members, and I encourage them to apply for future positions so the voices of First Nations leaders are elevated in our organisation," Harper commented.

In addition, he will push to expand membership across NAPSA's 19 branches saying, "the industry can expect even more from me and the executive team over the next 12 months". JG

### Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today features four pages of the latest pharmacy news, plus full pages from:

- Dispense Assist
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**Stan Grant**  
KEYNOTE

## High uptake of NACCHO's traineeships

**OVER 300** people have enrolled in the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation's (NACCHO) First Nations Health Worker Traineeship Program.

The peak body's move marks a significant milestone for its Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs).

Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians Health, Malarndirri McCarthy, updated the public during NAIDOC Week on the program's progress, at the Joint Council on Closing the Gap meeting in Adelaide.

Launched in Mar, the traineeship program aims to address workforce shortages in ACCHOs.

So far, 51 trainees have completed the program, developed in partnership with the government.

Training is delivered by ACCHOs, and includes on-the-job experience.

The Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service plays a crucial role in training Aboriginal health practitioners under the program,



offering additional support that has boosted completion rates.

One of the ACCHOs, Apunipima Cape York Health Council, has appointed a Student Support Manager through the program to ensure trainees are prepared for employment upon graduation.

The Federal Government has committed \$54.3 million to the program, aiming to train up to 500 First Nations people as Aboriginal health workers and practitioners.

NACCHO CEO Pat Turner commented, "four months since the launch of the First Nations Health Worker Traineeship Program, we are witnessing remarkable progress and a strengthened commitment to health sovereignty among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities".

"This initiative not only equips trainees with essential skills and wrap-around supports through culturally-nuanced programs, but also bridges key gaps in our healthcare system.

"Critically, growing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and human services workforce is key to achieving Closing the Gap Targets in health, wellbeing and education," Turner added.

"Our journey towards building the Aboriginal Health practitioner workforce by 2027 is well underway, reflecting our deep commitment to sustainable health outcomes and the principles of self-determination." JG

## Cannabis ad fines

**THE TGA** has issued three infringement notices totalling \$56,340 to News Life Media Pty Ltd for allegedly unlawful advertising of medicinal cannabis on its lifestyle website *Body+Soul*.

It claims a *Body+Soul* article promoted the use of medicinal cannabis to treat serious conditions like anxiety and chronic pain, violating the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989*.

Health Department's Acting Deputy Secretary Nick Henderson emphasised that advertising prescription-only medicines directly to consumers is banned to prevent inappropriate demand and potential harm.

He reiterated that treatment decisions should be made by health professionals with their patients and reminded media platforms of their responsibility to comply with advertising regulations.

## Hear from our Franchise Partners

"I've had support from Priceline Pharmacy from day dot. We had a new site and I don't think I could have done this without Priceline. The biggest feedback I've received from our community is the second they saw the sign go up, they were stoked. People will drive past one or two pharmacies to come to Priceline."

### Bishoy Ibrahim

Priceline Pharmacy Marsden Park, NSW

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## Watson revs the engine

**TECHNOLOGY** provider Healthengine has appointed David Watson as its new Chief Commercial Officer (CCO).

The new recruit follows the company's appointment of Matt Gudge as its Chief Marketing Officer in Mar this year.

Watson (**pictured**), has held several senior roles at LinkedIn, Salesforce, and employee wellbeing platform Sonder.

Starting his role this month, Watson will be instrumental in driving Healthengine's commercial strategy, forming strategic partnerships, and delivering exceptional value to customers.

He will report directly to CEO Dan Stinton, who commented, "David's appointment reflects our ongoing commitment to servicing our healthcare customers nationwide, and we're extremely excited to have him onboard as a core part of the Healthengine executive leadership team".

"With extensive commercial



experience across a wide range of industries, we look forward to working with him to cement our position in the primary healthcare marketplace in Australia."

Watson added he is passionate about joining a company that "makes a difference by leveraging innovative approaches to drive business success, and fostering a culture of excellence".

"With a mission of improving access to healthcare for all Australians, there's plenty for me to get stuck into at Healthengine with Dan and the team to achieve our ambitious goals and help unlock the company's full potential." JG

## SHPA, PSS shake on partnership extension

**IN WHAT** is being heralded as "a new era of pharmacy recognition and wellbeing", the Pharmacists' Support Service (PSS) has signed a new agreement with the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA).

The Memorandum of Understanding extends the organisations' existing partnership by three years, with funding to be provided through the Australian and New Zealand College of Advanced Pharmacy.

The collaboration is "fundamentally about pharmacists understanding and supporting their fellow pharmacists", according to PSS President Curtis Ruhnau (**pictured** right with SHPA President Tom Simpson).

"SHPA and PSS are like-minded organisations, equally committed to fostering a workforce that feels valued," he said.

"It has never been more important to have widespread



organisational support for our frontline workers - who are facing increasing demands to meet the evolving needs of Australians in need."

Simpson agreed, saying, "recognition of our unique skills and the care we can provide is important as pharmacists, and plays a key role in our satisfaction and wellbeing as health professionals". JM

## Time to rethink your dispensary set-up?

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## Dispensary Corner

**IT TURNS** out that the biggest animals do not necessarily have the biggest brains, contrary to what you might think.

A new study published in *Nature Ecology and Evolution*, which analysed a huge dataset of brain and body sizes from around 1,500 species, has challenged long-held beliefs about brain evolution.

The study revealed that the largest animals do not have proportionally bigger brains, with humans being an exception, having evolved more than 20 times faster than all other mammal species.

Humans were not the only species to buck the trend though, with primates, rodents, and carnivores also showing a tendency for relative brain size to increase in time.

"For more than a century, scientists have assumed that this relationship was linear - meaning that brain size gets proportionally bigger, the larger an animal is," said Professor Chris Venditti, lead author of the study from the University of Reading.

"We now know this is not true.

"The relationship between brain and body size is a curve, essentially meaning very large animals have smaller brains than expected."

Dr Joanna Baker, co-author of the study also from the University of Reading, believes brains could be prevented from getting too big because they are "simply too costly to maintain" beyond a certain size, however, more research is needed.

## Autism linked to gut bugs



**SCIENTISTS** in China recently discovered a link between certain gut bugs and autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

The team at the Chinese University of Hong Kong looked at the gut bugs of 1,627 children aged between one and 13, some of whom had ASD.

After controlling for additional factors including diet, medication, and comorbidity, they were able to identify 14 archaea (which are similar to bacteria), 51 bacteria,

seven fungi, 18 viruses, 27 microbial genes and 12 metabolic pathways that were altered in kids with ASD.

Scientists then used artificial intelligence (AI) to determine if the presence of 31 different bugs or functions could predict whether a child had ASD, and found this had a higher diagnostic accuracy than just looking at one type of bug, such as bacteria.

The findings, which were published in *Nature Microbiology*, could be used to develop a test for ASD that looks at the composition of gut bugs in kids, the authors suggested.

While the relationship between the gut microbiome and ASD had been a subject of previous research, the role of other members in this part of the anatomy, as well as its function, had not been explored prior to this study. *JM*

## Detect dementia

**RESEARCHERS** at Murdoch University have developed a new self-reporting tool which can detect a person's risk for Alzheimer's Disease and other forms of dementia.

The McCusker Subjective Cognitive Impairment Inventory is the product of more than a decade of study at Murdoch's Health Futures Institute in Western Australia.

The 46-item questionnaire looks at six cognitive domains and their rate of decline including memory, language, orientation, attention and concentration, visuoconstruction abilities, and executive function.

The tool will be available on *Open Access*, meaning no cost to clinicians and researchers.

## PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

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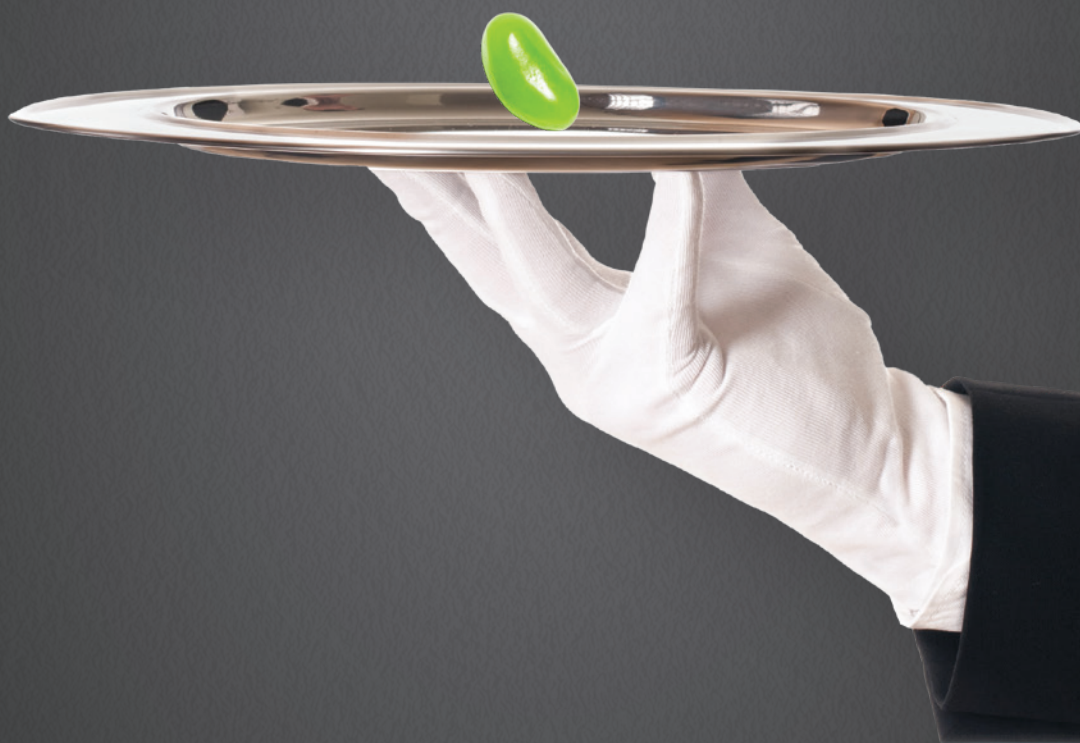
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