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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news, plus full pages from:

- Pointrs
- BioCeuticals

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Learn more on [page five](#).

Ease sore muscles

BIOCEUTICALS is highlighting its new Ultra Muscleze + Pain Relief, which has been formulated to relieve mild joint pain and soreness, and support muscle function and muscle health - see the [back page](#).

Sandoz pushes for biosimilars uptake

SANDOZ, a biosimilar and generic medicines company, is marking Global Biosimilars Week (GBW) by highlighting the growing impact of biosimilars on healthcare worldwide.

Despite their advantages, data shows biosimilar uptake in Australia remains among the lowest in the OECD, with usage rates under 25%, compared to more than 90% in countries like the UK, Netherlands, and Denmark.

Sandoz Australia and New Zealand's General Manager, Clint Holland (**pictured**), said, "we are dedicated to improving access to high-quality, affordable medicines".

"Biosimilar medicines play a crucial role in this mission by providing more treatment options for patients and helping to reduce healthcare costs.

"Our portfolio of biosimilar medicines spans a range of therapeutic areas, including oncology and immunology, ensuring that patients have access to life-saving treatments."



Marnie Peterson, CEO of the Generic and Biosimilar Medicines Association, noted that biosimilars are essential to make advanced therapies accessible as the cost of biologics climbs.

"Biosimilars offer innovation and an affordable pathway to high-quality treatments," Peterson said, especially for patients with chronic diseases such as cancer and diabetes.

She encouraged stakeholders to support efforts to increase biosimilar use in Australia.

Holland commented, "we are proud to be at the forefront of this movement, supporting a more sustainable healthcare system and being part of wider conversations to further support the uptake of biosimilar medicines to create greater access".

"Together, we are making a significant impact on global healthcare," he added.

The company estimates its biosimilar treatments have saved over US\$18 billion (A\$17 billion) in healthcare costs across the US and Europe, with a social impact of around US\$400 billion (A\$606 billion) globally.

Furthermore, to celebrate GBW, Sandoz and Slovenia's Ministry of Economic Development and Technology hosted an event in Brussels, showcasing the company's European manufacturing biosimilars production capacity. JG

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RSV vax on NIP

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has welcomed yesterday's announcement by Federal Health Minister Mark Butler to offer pregnant women free access to the RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) vaccine, Abrysvo.

"Vaccines are vital for patient safety, and Abrysvo is critical in preventing RSV-related hospitalisations in babies," National President of the Guild, Trent Twomey, said.

Previously costing patients around \$300, the vaccine will now be free to patients through the National Immunisation Program Vaccination in Pharmacy at community pharmacies.

Twomey highlighted that pharmacies already provide many vaccines to expectant mothers at no cost.

"Open early and late, community pharmacy is the most convenient and affordable way to get vaccinated," Twomey said.

"Pharmacists offer RSV, whooping cough, influenza and shingles vaccines, as well as vaccines needed for overseas travel," he added.

"The Pharmacy Guild looks forward to continuing to work with the government to ensure primary healthcare services, such as vaccine administration, are as accessible as possible for all Australians," Twomey commented.

To book a vaccination, go to findapharmacy.com.au

CW's blister pack venture



CHEMIST Warehouse, Pharmacycle, and Kenvue have launched their largest blister pack recycling program nationwide in time for National Recycling Week, beginning yesterday.

Following a successful trial late last year at 100 Chemist Warehouse locations in Victoria, the initiative has expanded to all Chemist Warehouse and My Chemist stores nationwide.

Customers can now recycle empty blister packs in Codral-branded Pharmacycle bins located near the dispensary.

The goal is to divert blister packs from landfill by collecting them in-store for recycling.

So far, over 4.4 million blister packs, or 6,620kg of waste, has been collected and repurposed into decking and fencing materials.

"With our shared mission of recycling blister packs across Australia, we are thrilled to work with Pharmacycle and Kenvue," said Mario Tascone, Director at Chemist Warehouse.

"We are committed to offering customers simple and efficient recycling solutions that promote

sustainability," Tascone added.

Founded in 2022, Pharmacycle is an end-to-end blister pack recycling program, handling all collection, logistics, and processing domestically, supporting a circular economy and Australian jobs.

Once collected, blister packs are processed by specialised machinery to separate aluminium and plastic.

The aluminium is sent to Weston Aluminium in NSW to create de-oxidant for steelmaking, while the plastic is transported to Think Fencing in Victoria for PVC decking and fencing.

Jason Rijnbeek, Business Development Manager at Pharmacycle said, "by keeping processing local, we're supporting Australian jobs and contributing to a more sustainable economy".

Kenvue's Australia and New Zealand Managing Director, Nadia Stone, said its focus on sustainable practices, and partnerships like this, "amplify our impact, and we are excited to help Australians make a positive environmental impact". JG

AdPha's report card

ADVANCED Pharmacy Australia (AdPha) has published its 2024 Annual Report, spotlighting strategic investments, growth in member services, and the organisation's rebranding.

Key achievements include an increase in membership and Specialty Practice participation, as well as the organisation's largest honour roll to date, recognising nearly 400 contributors.

AdPha President Tom Simpson said the transition to a new brand and trading name sparked critical discussions among members about the evolving identity of hospital pharmacy (PD 28 Aug).

"Hospital pharmacy has never stood still, and neither can we," he stated, adding that the new branding emphasises the future of the profession as a leader in hospital-informed care delivered in diverse settings.

The report also highlighted milestones such as nearly 5,700 members, over 7,000 event participants, and a growing Specialty Practice program supported by a new app.

Simpson noted that while numbers show growth, it is the active engagement of members that truly define AdPha's strength.

Looking forward, AdPha plans to release updated Clinical Pharmacy Standards and continue advancing specialisation through its Specialty Practice program.

Mpox webinar

THE International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) is holding an 'Mpox update session: What pharmacists should know', in response to the World Health Organization's determination that the new upsurge of the disease constitutes a public health emergency of international concern.

To register for the webinar on 14 Nov, [CLICK HERE](#).



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Inaugural Cholesterol Awareness Week

THIS week, some of Australia's leading heart health charities - Hearts4heart, Heart Support Australia, and Heartbeat of Sport - have united to launch the country's first Cholesterol Awareness Week (11-17 Nov).

The initiative aims to raise awareness of high cholesterol, a condition affecting around 2.1 million Australians and known as the 'silent disease' because it often presents no symptoms.

Left unchecked, high cholesterol can lead to atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD), which is responsible for up to 85% of related deaths globally due to heart attacks and strokes.

In Australia, ASCVD has been a factor in nearly a quarter of all deaths, with cardiovascular disease costing the healthcare system an estimated \$14.3 billion annually.

Cholesterol Awareness Week hopes to empower Australians with knowledge to take proactive steps to manage cholesterol levels,

benefiting both individuals and healthcare policy.

"Our understanding of cholesterol is often limited," said Tanya Hall, CEO of Hearts4heart.

"High cholesterol and ASCVD can be managed, and early detection is essential," Hall added.

"We urge all Australians to speak to their doctors and get a heart health check-up."

During this week, free heart screenings will be offered to adults attending the car racing event Vailo Adelaide 500 from 14-17 Nov.

"By bringing heart testing to community events, we're helping people #KnowYourNumbers and make healthier choices," Heartbeat of Sport's founder Andy Paschalidis explained.

Dr Christian Verdicchio, CEO of Heart Support Australia, emphasised the importance of early intervention, stating, "cardiovascular disease is a leading cause of death, but many heart conditions can be prevented".

"A simple appointment with your healthcare professional could save your life."

Hearts4heart also recently contributed to the IPEC study, a multinational patient-led research initiative that highlights educational gaps for those living with high cholesterol.

The study showed that many patients feel disconnected from key decisions about their care.

Prof Gemma Figtree, Chair of the Cardiovascular Initiative at the University of Sydney, noted that healthcare providers play a critical role in engaging patients in understanding their cholesterol levels and risk factors.

However, she said high cholesterol is often underestimated by the public and policymakers alike.

"We hope this initiative sparks meaningful discussions to improve outcomes and ensure community-level support for those affected by high cholesterol," Figtree said.

To learn more, **CLICK HERE**. *JG*

Qld CHO resigns

INFECTIOUS diseases expert, Dr John Gerrard, who recently announced he will not seek a second term as Queensland's Chief Health Officer (CHO), was commended by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's Qld branch.

Branch President Chris Owen paid tribute to Dr Gerrard's dedication, particularly through the critical stages of the state's COVID-19 recovery.

"Queensland has been extraordinarily well-served by Dr Gerrard's leadership and commitment, as he began his tenure as CHO during a critical time as the state was coming out of the worst of the pandemic, and beginning the recovery process," Owen said.

"Community pharmacists across Queensland have valued our partnership with him."

Dr Gerrard returns to clinical practice, with the Qld govt advertising for an interim CHO to assume the role from mid-Dec.

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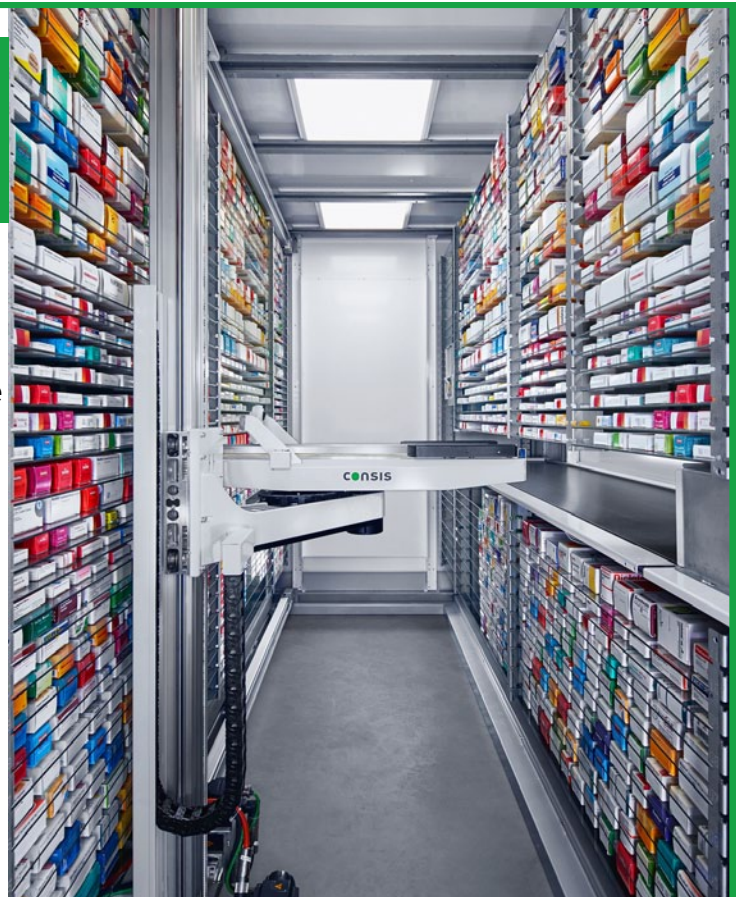
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Dispensary Corner

WHO knew Lego bricks could be the missing link in healthcare?

Pharmacy student colleagues are discovering that these childhood staples aren't just for fun - they're also a new way to bridge the gap between allied and medical professions.

Midwifery expert Liz McNeill and Dr Lyn Gum led the charge at Flinders University and UniSA, using the principles of Lego Seriousplay as an "ice-breaking" tool in several workshops for midwifery and medical students.

The idea was to build a birthing room, brick by brick, and talk through each other's priorities while arranging tiny beds, equipment, and little Lego mums and babies.

"We wanted to shake up the usual power dynamics and make collaboration feel natural, even playful," said McNeill, a midwifery academic.

The students were skeptical at first but soon embraced the popular blocks.

According to McNeill, conversations flowed from birthing care to perspectives on teamwork, with many students saying they felt more comfortable chatting with their "hospital colleagues" later on.

Lego might not make it into the pharmacy study program anytime soon, but for those learning to collaborate, the colourful bricks could build stronger bonds, and give everyone a few laughs along the way.



Ego's QV tubes changing

EGO has announced a packaging overhaul for its QV skincare products, switching from laminate to recyclable LDPE tubes to reduce environmental impact.

The transition, already underway, aims to divert 18 tonnes of packaging waste from landfills annually by making all QV tube products recyclable in Australia's kerbside bins.

The laminate packaging currently used cannot be processed in Australian recycling facilities, however, LDPE can.

"This project has been two years in the making and involved extensive production and stability trials for key products," said Ego's Packaging Projects & Studio Manager, Simone Thomassen.

"We've ensured the transition to LDPE maintains the high standards of product quality QV customers expect," he added.

The switch includes QV products for Australian, Asian, and Middle Eastern markets, with all products expected to be converted within the next 12 months, based on production timelines.

Ego worked closely with Impact International, an Aussie company focused on environmentally



sustainable manufacturing.

Impact's practices include using solar energy, a no-heavy-metals policy, significant recycling efforts, and even maintaining a sustainable forest to offset raw materials used in tube production.

This initiative moves Ego closer to its goal of making 100% of its cosmetic packaging reusable or recyclable, aligning with the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation and ANZPAC goals.

By prioritising sustainable packaging, Ego aims to support long-term environmental health, reflecting the brand's ongoing commitment to responsible production and reduced waste in the cosmetics industry. JG

Rural palliative care to get a voice: UniSA

RESEARCHERS at the University of South Australia (UniSA), and Flinders University, are investigating the end-of-life care experiences of rural South Australians to enhance palliative care access and delivery.

Funded by The Hospital Research Foundation Group, the 'My Story, Our Journey' project aims to understand rural patients' unique needs and improve available supports.

Researchers will conduct flexible, participant-centred interviews in homes, aged care facilities, or online.

In rural Australia, where nearly 30% of the population live but only 16% of palliative care professionals work, limited access to specialist care is impacting quality of life, lead researcher Shannen van der Kruk highlighted.

To email for info, [CLICK HERE](#).



Guild Update

Making a difference

THREE outstanding pharmacists were recently recognised for their impactful contributions to healthcare in their communities.

Sobia and Irfan Hashmi received the 2025 South Australia Local Hero Award for their dedication to culturally-sensitive healthcare in remote and rural communities.

Employing staff who collectively speak 21 languages, they have broadened healthcare access in South Australia.

They have also provided free webinars to prepare over 4,000 overseas pharmacists for exams in the past year, helping to meet critical workforce needs.

Reflecting on the award in a LinkedIn post, Irfan said, "this award is not just ours - it belongs to our incredible community, family, friends, and every individual who has supported us on this journey".

"Together, we are stronger, and can make a difference."

Laura Stewart of Pharmacy 777 in Western Australia's remote Pilbara region was recognised as a Medicare Champion in the Stronger Medicare Awards.

Her outreach initiatives for Aboriginal Health and fly-in-fly-out workers, and mentorship of over 150 students, highlight her commitment to rural healthcare.

Congratulations also to Gareth Wheeldon of Capital Chemist University of Canberra, who was another Medicare awards finalist.

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