

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news, plus a full page from **Direct Chemist Outlet**.

Xmas shutdown

PHARMACY Daily is taking a break over the holidays, with today our last issue for 2025.

We wish all of our readers a happy and healthy holiday season, and we look forward to seeing you in 2026 when we return on Mon 05 Jan.

Cannabis use rises for disadvantaged

PEOPLE living in socially disadvantaged and regional areas of Australia are consuming significantly more cannabis than their counterparts in wealthier metropolitan towns and cities, a new study has found.

Combining large-scale wastewater analysis with national survey data to track cannabis use trends from 2018 to 2025, researchers found that intake has steadily risen across all communities.

The study showed that the most disadvantaged communities, as well as outer regional and remote areas, recorded more than double the consumption rates of the wealthiest areas, with calls for harm-reduction strategies to be tailored to the communities most affected.

"Higher consumption in disadvantaged and remote communities likely reflects a complex mix of attributes such as access to services, economic conditions and social norms," explained Dr Rory Verhagen of the University of Queensland.

"That gap has persisted over time, providing a rare, objective insight into population-level drug use and highlighting the need for targeted health responses," he added.

The paper is available **HERE**.

PSA chief steps down

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) announced yesterday that its chief executive officer, Adjunct Associate Professor Steve Morris, had given notice that he is resigning (**PD** Breaking News).

Today will be his last day in the role, with the PSA Board appointing PSA Vice President Elect Bridget Totterman as Interim CEO "to ensure all key strategic initiatives of the PSA are brought to fruition".

The Board acknowledged Assoc Prof Morris' impact throughout his tenure with the organisation, including achievements and progress made on key strategic initiatives, membership growth, strengthened relationships with government and other stakeholders, and commitment to drive innovation in quality use of medicines and pharmacist practice.

PSA National President Assoc Prof Fei Sim said the organisation remains focused on stability and continuity as it enters the next phase of transformational growth, and thanked Assoc Prof Morris for his contribution.

Holiday dementia support available

DEMENTIA Australia is seeking to reassure the community that its dementia support and information will continue to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week over the coming holiday period.

This can be a challenging time for people living with dementia, their families and carers, with lots of social gatherings, changes in routine or environment and travel, said Dementia Australia CEO Professor Tanya Buchanan.

"It might be a time when you haven't seen a family member in a while and you notice something has changed," she explained.

The National Dementia Helpline can be reached on 1800 100 500, or via live online chat through Dementia Australia's website **HERE**.

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DCO is growing

DIRECT Chemist Outlet is a franchise by pharmacists for pharmacists, now spanning over 140 stores.

See **p3** for more about the benefits of joining DCO.

Get the lowdown on locum pharmacy

LOCUM pharmacy is growing in Australia, providing pharmacists with greater flexibility, higher earning potential, and varied professional experiences.

In the latest *Your Pharmacy Career* podcast, host Krysti-Lee Patterson chats with Heidi Dariz, General Manager at Raven's Recruitment, exploring the story behind the rise in locum placements and how pharmacists can enter the locum workforce confidently and professionally.

The conversation provided a practical roadmap for those considering locum work, including how to prepare credentials, build a locum-ready CV, understand workplace expectations, and navigate common administrative questions such as payroll, invoicing, ABNs, GST, and superannuation.

Dariz also discussed tips for avoiding common mistakes and recognising red flags before accepting a placement.

Listen to the podcast **HERE**.



"Steve has overseen and led the team at the PSA through a significant period of challenge, including major health policy changes and sector-wide reforms," she said.

"We thank Steve for the significant contribution he has made to progressing PSA's mission to advance pharmacy practice in all areas of practice, and to support pharmacists to continue to deliver excellence in healthcare to all patients."

Morris (**pictured**) wished the PSA well as it further enhances access to care and improves the quality use of medicines.

"During my time as CEO, I have thoroughly enjoyed being part of such a passionate and committed team during a period of challenge, growth and transformation for the organisation," he said.

"I am proud of the strides we have made in supporting the pharmacy workforce across Australia."

A recruitment process will be undertaken in the first half of 2026 to appoint a new CEO.

The tenure of Assoc Prof Fei Sim as PSA President ends this year, with Professor Mark Naunton taking the reins from Jan 2026 (**PD** 08 Dec).



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...see more info



Dispensary Corner

IN EXCELLENT news just in time for the festive season, Swedish researchers have found that eating high fat cheeses and cream could reduce the chances of developing dementia.

In a study recently published in *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology, scientists revealed that people who indulged in 20g of heavy cream - roughly one-and-a-half tablespoons - had a 16% lower risk of dementia than those who consumed none.

Those who ate 50g of cheese daily reduced their chances by 13% compared to those who ate less than 15g a day.

In terms of vascular dementia, the risk of developing the condition was 29% lower for those who eat cheese.

Researchers analysed information from 27,670 seniors and tracked their health over a period of 25 years.

During that time, participants kept track of what they ate for one week, and reported on how much their diet had changed over the last few years.

"For decades, the debate over high-fat versus low-fat diets has shaped health advice, sometimes even categorising cheese as an unhealthy food to limit," says Dr Emily Sonestedt, an associate professor from Lund University, Sweden, who was the study's senior author.

"Our study found that some high-fat dairy products may actually lower the risk of dementia, challenging some long-held assumptions about fat and brain health."

Narrative of safer nicotine must end, experts say

A **NEW** expert consensus report by international researchers has concluded that nicotine is toxic for the heart and blood vessels, regardless of whether it is consumed via a vape, pouch, shisha or cigarette.

The team looked at every existing study investigating harms of all nicotine products, representing the first attempt to consider the drug's effects beyond just smoking.

Among the key findings were that nicotine is a potent cardiovascular toxin that causes damage to the heart and blood vessels and high blood pressure, regardless of the delivery system, with no nicotine-containing product being a safe option in terms of heart health.

The researchers also determined that passive exposure to smoke, vape and heated tobacco emissions causes vascular harm.

A dramatic rise in the use

of vapes, heated tobacco and nicotine pouches was reported, particularly among adolescents and young adults, and three-quarters of young adult vapers had never smoked before

The team cautioned that vapes and pouches are not effective cessation tools, but rather an entry point to smoking and often lead to use alongside cigarettes.

Urgent action is needed to curb the growing number of adolescents and young people becoming addicted to nicotine, the authors said, with a ban on flavours and social media and influencer advertising, and effective taxation and regulation across all nicotine products.

"This paper is a wake-up call for regulators," said co-author Professor Thomas Luscher from Royal Brompton & Harefield Hospitals, London, UK.



"The shift from cigarettes to e-cigarettes and flavoured pouches is not effective harm reduction; it is rather a transformation of addiction strategies," he continued.

"The science is clear: the cardiovascular toxicity of nicotine is evidence-based by now.

"The duty now lies with legislators to protect the public, especially children, from a new epidemic of addiction and disease," Professor Luscher concluded.

Read the report [HERE](#). KB

Chemist Warehouse teams up with Tennis Australia

CHEMIST Warehouse has extended its partnership with Tennis Australia, bolstering its support for the Australian Open and events such as the United Cup, and the Adelaide, Brisbane and Hobart Internationals.

The partnership now includes presenting rights partner status for the national Cardio Tennis program, an initiative that uses the sport as a way for people of all ages and abilities to play, stay active and connect with others.

"We're excited to expand our partnership with Chemist Warehouse to include Cardio Tennis," said Tom Larner, Chief Tennis Officer, Tennis Australia.

"This collaboration reinforces our shared commitment to health and wellbeing and encourages

more Australians to pick up a racquet and enjoy the benefits of an active lifestyle."

At the 2026 Australian Open, Chemist Warehouse will operate its flagship store with an on-site pharmacist, providing access to health and wellness products and advice, as well as exclusive value offers, photo moments, and a heat relief station.

The pharmacy giant will also run a Workforce Wellness program, providing Australian Open staff with a dedicated wellness space stocked with self-care items, recovery products, and general wellness essentials throughout the event.

"Chemist Warehouse is proud to continue championing wellness, value and accessibility for tennis



fans and communities across Australia," said Mario Tascone, Deputy CEO, Chemist Warehouse.

"Our partnership with Tennis Australia reflects our long-standing commitment to supporting healthy, active lifestyles while delivering great value."

Pictured: Tennis Australia CCO Cedric Cornelis, broadcaster and former player Jelena Dokic, Mario Tascone, and Tom Larner.

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