



Pharmacy  
 Daily

# 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

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# EDITOR'S LETTER



**W**elcome to *Pharmacy Daily's* 2025 edition of our Year in Review special report, where we reflect on the major industry news from the year gone by.

In this issue, a number of industry executives have shared their thoughts on 2025, including Meg Brideson, Willach Australia's Managing Director, Guild National President Trent Twomey, PSA President Fei Sim, and Richard Pearson, Chief Customer Officer at Wesfarmers Health.

As Twomey said in his look back on 2025, it has been "a landmark year", with evolution in scope of practice and the role of pharmacy within the broader health system.

While expanded scope very much dominated the news, you will also see in our month-by-month feature some of the other biggest stories of the year, including training opportunities, updates on new medicines, retail innovation and pharmacy's move into the women's health space, particularly around menopause.

When joining *Pharmacy Daily* as editor at the end of last year from a health system and medical research background, I did not know a lot about the pharmacy industry and profession – it has been quite a learning curve.

It has also been an absolute joy getting to meet some of you to learn about the profession firsthand.

One thing that struck me very quickly was not just the passion and commitment of pharmacists to their service as health professionals, but the truly inspiring initiatives and innovations that occur on an individual or store level.

Some that stood out include the patient medication tapering app TaperMate from ACT pharmacist Alicia Martin, the CueDose electronic pill pack from Julie Williams in Melbourne, and Perth pharmacist Bo Youn Kim's EmpowHer Menopause clinics.

Meanwhile, the quality and diversity of store-level initiatives must surely make selecting a pharmacy of the year a major headache – albeit one that is good to experience.

This was driven home when reading through the first of the finalists listed for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's Pharmacy of the Year award at the beginning of 2025.

After looking over their extraordinary achievements, I figured they were a shoo-in for the title. But then I read about the second finalist, and the third... and was relieved I was not a judge.

We can never precisely predict the future, but we can be certain this "small but mighty" profession, in the words of PSA's Sim, will continue to make waves in 2026

as it further redefines and cements its role in Australia's healthcare system.

Finally, we publish *Pharmacy Daily* for you, and we are always keen to get feedback and hear about the stories you want to see. Please feel free to reach out at [karina.bray@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:karina.bray@pharmacydaily.com.au).

Congratulations to a fabulous 2025, and here's to more in 2026. ••

”

**WE CAN NEVER  
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CERTAIN THIS SMALL BUT  
MIGHTY PROFESSION...  
WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE  
WAVES IN 2026.**

**Karina Bray**  
Editor  
*Pharmacy Daily*



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# CONTENTS



## 16

### TALKIN' 'BOUT A REVOLUTION

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's Fei Sim shares the major achievements of the sector and the goals for 2026.



## 20

### LEADING THE WAY

A Q&A interview with Wesfarmers Health Chief Customer Officer, Richard Pearson.



## 03

### EDITOR'S LETTER

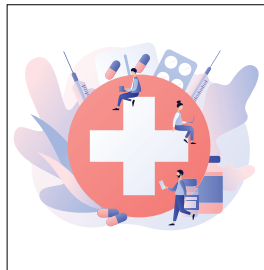
Pharmacy Daily Editor Karina reflects on which industry leaders inspired her in the world of pharmacy this year.



## 08

### A YEAR OF TRANSFORMATION

A look back at some of the gamechanging moves for the Australian pharmacy industry.



## 12

### OPINION: A FUTURE FORWARD

Willach Australia MD Meg Brideson on the opportunities that lie ahead for pharmacists.



## 14

### A YEAR OF PROGRESS, A FUTURE OF POSSIBILITY

Pharmacy Guild of Australia's Trent Twomey on what is next for the organisation.



## 23

### 2025 AT A GLANCE

Our month-by-month breakdown of the most significant news stories of the past year for the pharmacy sector.

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# [A YEAR OF TRANSFORMATION]

A look back at some of the gamechanging moves for the Australian pharmacy industry.

BY KARINA BRAY

**T**he year 2025 has been transformative for Australian pharmacy, marked by bold reforms, expanded clinical roles, and significant shifts in training and new retail concepts, with scope of practice, concerns over the explosion in medicinal cannabis prescribing and pharmacist education frequently hitting the headlines.

## Expanded scope of practice

Over the course of the year, governments in all states and territories committed to some degree of expanded scope, with a varying number of conditions either currently able to be treated, in pilot, or planned.

Queensland health minister Tim Nicholls announced at APP2026 that the state's full scope pilot would be made permanent and statewide, allowing suitably qualified pharmacists to treat 19 conditions, with another five conditions currently being piloted. In early November, the state marked 5,000 patient consultations through the state's full scope program.

South Australia leads the way in vaccination, with the announcement in February that pharmacist immunisers are able to authorise and administer any vaccine within their individual scope of practice - including for the first time travel health vaccines for cholera, rabies and typhoid - with no age restrictions.

Most other states changed the minimum age for flu vaccine.

TerryWhite Chemmart's General Manager Michael Beaumont, General Manager, noted how quickly fullscope has shifted "from an exciting possibility to an everyday part of pharmacy practice".

"Our leadership in this space - through programs like Pathway to Prescribing and Masterclass - has created real momentum, with hundreds of pharmacists progressing through their training," he said.

"We're now seeing prescribing services delivered through our CareClinic rooms, where they are needed most, which has been fantastic. The confidence and appetite from our pharmacists is unmistakable, and it's exciting to see TerryWhite Chemmart playing such a significant role in shaping the future of professional practice."

While welcoming the major developments in expanded scope over 2025, pharmacy leaders continue to call for national harmonisation. This is essential to allow greater workforce mobilisation, reduce confusion among consumers around what services pharmacists offer, and importantly, to create equity.

As Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) National President Associate Professor Fei Sim pointed out, when a consumer in one jurisdiction is able to access more care that is more affordable and more timely compared to someone in another jurisdiction, that is not equitable. »



## Greater education opportunities

Post-graduate education offerings to support expanded scope have also increased over the year, with Adelaide University, University of Technology Sydney, University of Newcastle, and University of Western Australia announcing new training programs commencing this year or in 2026, joining James Cook University and Monash University's programs. The PSA also launched a new comprehensive training program.

The move towards pharmacist prescribing has not been unchallenged, and as the Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President Trent Twomey explained in his industry wrap (see page 14), there has been opposition from certain doctor groups on the issue.

With appropriately qualified pharmacists now able to use the title Doctor, graduate pharmacists can now take on a Doctor of Pharmacy program at Charles Darwin University, and a Doctor of Pharmacy Practice at the University of Western Australia. May saw six pharmacy graduates from Charles Darwin University (CDU) become the first in Australia to be awarded the title of Doctor of Pharmacy.

A major development in education this year was the PSA's acquisition of the Australasian College of Pharmacy, marking a significant step for expanding educational offerings and professional and practice support for members and the pharmacy profession.

The acquisition was first proposed in January, with PSA members voting in support of the move in February, and the official signing taking place in October.

The PSA's Associate Professor Fei Sim stated the agreement was "a transformational opportunity for the future of pharmacy education", while the College declared it a "momentous event in the history of the Australian pharmacy industry".

## In medicines news

At the APP2025 conference in March, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Health Minister Mark Butler made a surprise appearance to announce a price drop in the maximum cost of PBS prescriptions to \$25.

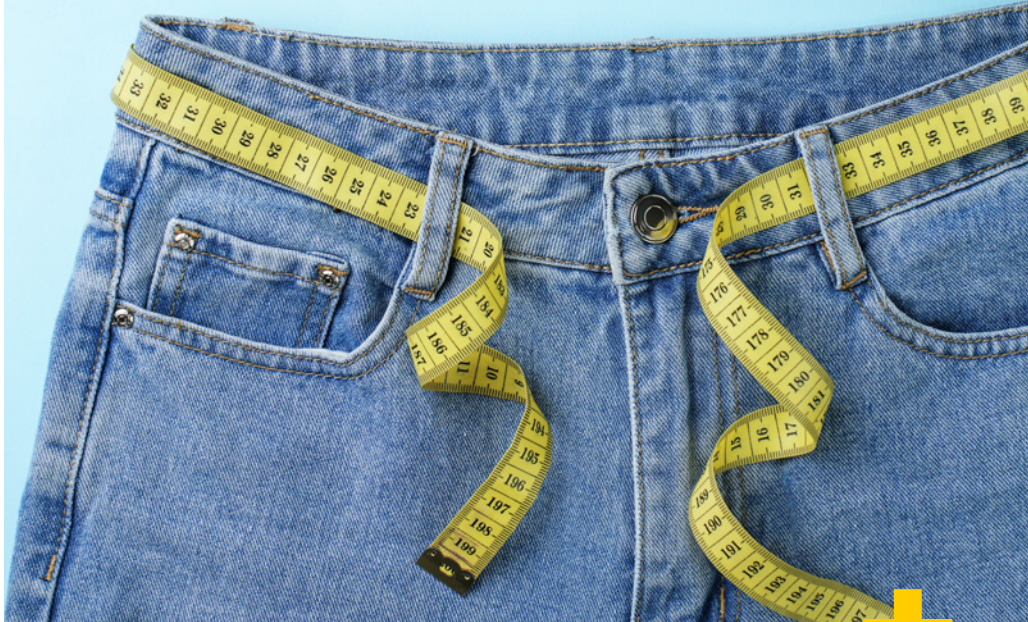
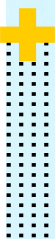
"We're investing in a stronger pharmacy sector and we're investing in cheaper medicines - and I want to pay tribute to the Guild on this factor as well," Albanese told attendees at the conference.

"I want to see an Australia that is stronger economically, but also fairer,



## DEMAND FOR DIABETES-WEIGHT LOSS CROSSOVER DRUGS SEMAGLUTIDE AND TIRZEPATIDE HAS SHOWN NO SIGNS OF ABATING."

ANALYSIS



and also one in which we continue to not just be proud of the health system that we've delivered, but strengthening it into the future."

Legislation was passed by both houses in September, with the new cap to take effect from 01 Jan 2026.

Medicinal cannabis continued to cause controversy, with the PSA and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia joining with doctors' peak bodies the Australian Medical Association and Royal Australian College of GPs to demand government action to tackle the largely unregulated increase in medicinal cannabis prescribing and dispensing across the country.

Demand for diabetes-weight loss crossover drugs semaglutide (Ozempic, Wegovy) and tirzepatide (Mounjaro, Zepbound) has shown no signs of abating in 2025, while shortages that impacted supply in previous years are now largely resolved.

Meanwhile, a new GLP-1RA oral pill orforglipron (Eli Lilly) has shown promising results across several studies for both weight loss and glucose control in diabetic and non-diabetic patients.

## Women's health in the spotlight

Women's health was a major focus for the Federal Government this year, with initiatives including new PBS listings for



contraceptives Yaz, Yasmin, Slinda and NuvaRing, as well as menopausal hormone therapies Estrogel and Prometrium.

"Australia has one of the lowest uptake rates in the developed world of long-acting contraceptives, partly due to access and affordability," said Minister Butler.

"These changes to PBS and expanded options though the PBS will remove cost and access barriers so that more women can choose the contraceptive option that works best for them."

New drugs approved by the TGA this year included the first disease-modifying, anti-amyloid drugs for use in early Alzheimer's disease: Kisunla (donanemab, Eli Lilly) and Leqembi (lecanemab, Eisai). »



However, Lilly had its PBS application for Kisunla knocked back, making the medicine out of reach for many.

On the retail front, the Chemist Warehouse merger with Sigma, which was years in the making, was finalised in February, with strong financials at the end of FY25 and the move declared a financial and strategic success at its first post-merger AGM in October.

Sigma converted more than 20 My Chemist stores to Amcal+ pharmacies over the course of this year as part of its broader strategy to reinvigorate Amcal's position as a leader in the Australian pharmacy landscape.

Wesfarmers Health has built on the success of its online medical clinic InstantScripts to create a new bricks-and-mortar retail concept - InstantScripts Pharmacy Health Hubs. With branches in Victoria and Queensland, customers can access healthcare products and scripts, vaccinations and health screenings face-to-face, with telehealth access to doctors also provided where appropriate.

Meanwhile, Wesfarmers' Atomica standalone beauty and wellness stores, which launched last year, continued their expansion, with six nationally.

Wesfarmers Health also made a decisive

move into the menopause market, with its Anything Menopause in-store and online initiative, launched in September. Every Priceline Pharmacy now has at least one pharmacist or pharmacy assistant trained to deliver menopause support, thanks to accredited menopause education developed in partnership with Jean Hailes for Women's Health. Anything Menopause also covers a curated range of products to support skin, hair and health needs.

"Despite being a major health transition impacting half the global population, menopause is still shrouded in silence, stigma and lack of information or misinformation," said Mel Gannon, Priceline's Head of Pharmacy Services.

"We're breaking down barriers by giving our teams the training and tools to provide trusted, personalised support in store and online - it's about ensuring women feel seen, heard and helped at every stage," she said.

Together, these milestones reflect a profession in rapid evolution, one that is embracing greater responsibility and redefining pharmacy's role as a cornerstone of Australia's healthcare future - one that is more accessible, patient-focused, and ready to meet the challenges of 2026 and beyond. ••

## ANALYSIS



**MENOPAUSE IS STILL SHROUDED IN SILENCE, STIGMA AND LACK OF INFORMATION OR MISINFORMATION."**



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# FUTURE FORWARD



**Meg Brideson**, Willach Australia's Managing Director, reflects on the past year in pharmacy and shares her thoughts on the opportunities ahead.

**A**s we move into 2026, community pharmacy faces a complex mix of challenges - workforce shortages, regulatory complexity, inventory management pressures, and the implementation of expanded scope of practice. These factors are reshaping how pharmacies operate and deliver care.

This is where technology becomes a game-changer. With an estimated 12% of pharmacies currently adopting robotic dispensing, there is enormous potential to utilise technological capabilities to save time, reduce stress, and support improved patient outcomes, whilst helping pharmacies maintain a sustainable business model.

## Empowering pharmacists through tech

Momentum is also building in the integration of automation with dispensing software such as Fred Dispense Plus, simplifying tasks like ordering stock and reconciling wholesaler invoices. This integration enables real-time stock visibility, accuracy, and smarter decision-making, ultimately empowering pharmacists and dispense technicians to focus more on patient care rather than admin tasks.

It is encouraging to see the industry embrace the expanded scope of practice delivering these services in a way that is professional, sustainable, and differentiated. The changes underway are creating a more clinical, patient-centric environment, enabling pharmacists to provide broader health support while maintaining the

integrity and efficiency of their operations.

Technology will play a pivotal role in this transformation by helping pharmacies manage complexity, streamline workflows, and free up time for meaningful patient interactions. By combining automation, smart inventory systems, and integrated software, pharmacies can position themselves as trusted health hubs ready to meet the evolving needs of their communities.

## A milestone year

This year was truly a milestone for Willach, marking 20 years since the first robotic installation in Australia and reaffirming our position as the longest-serving pharmacy robotics company in the region.

At APP 2025, we proudly launched the CONSYS C, the latest evolution in our robotic line-up. Its sleek design and state-of-the-art technology redefine automation, from intuitive user experience and advanced control software to precision-engineered mechanical and electronic components with remote monitoring capabilities. The addition of StockMaster autoloading further enhances efficiency.

The most exciting part? The rapid adoption of CONSYS C, with many customers upgrading from our very first generation of robots - a true testament of the trust they have in us.

We also introduced the Willach Australia Advanced Inventory Management Software, developed in-house through close collaboration with our customers and our

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

**AN ESTIMATED 12% OF PHARMACIES CURRENTLY ADOPT ROBOTIC DISPENSING.**

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I am incredibly proud of our service technicians who not only install the robots, but also keep our existing customers operational. With a large fleet of robots, even with some of the oldest approaching 20 years, we maintained 99.9% uptime and a consistent five-star service rating, ensuring reliability for the pharmacies that depend on us.

As pharmacies evolve beyond dispensing into primary healthcare delivery, embracing automation and integrated technology will become critical to supporting the changes to roles within the dispensary environment.

At Willach, we remain committed to supporting this transformation by creating efficiencies in the dispensary through optimised workflows, ensuring every square metre works harder to support patient care, builds trust, and grows this new healthcare service offering. ••





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## LISTINGS

### SYDNEY NORTHSHORE PHARMACY & FREEHOLD #1078 FOR SALE BY EOI (To be sold as a package)

- Sales FY2025 - \$4,934,635
- All scripts FY2025 - 57,540
- FREEHOLD - GFA - 168 sqm (as per the strata plan) - valuation available.

### SYDNEY NORTH-WESTERN SUBURB PHARMACY #1077 FOR SALE BY EOI

- Sales FY2025 - \$2,570,039
- All scripts FY2025 - 34,741

### BRISBANE PHARMACY - 50% SHARE - #1079 - FOR SALE BY EOI

- Sales FY2025 - \$2,273,963
- All scripts FY2025 - 33,853

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# A YEAR OF PROGRESS, A FUTURE OF POSSIBILITY



National President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, **Trent Twomey** discusses the organisation's bold 2035 strategic plan and what lies ahead for the industry.

It has been a landmark year for community pharmacy in Australia. In 2025, we've seen the profession evolve, not just in scope, but in its role within the broader healthcare system. Pharmacists are no longer just dispensers - they are clinicians, educators, and frontline health providers. And the momentum is only building.

This year, the Guild launched its Towards 2035 Strategic Plan, a bold roadmap that sets out our vision for community pharmacies to become primary healthcare hubs. It's a plan shaped by our members, grounded in patient needs, and driven by the belief that healthier communities are built when pharmacists are empowered to practise to their full scope.

Our goal is clear: by 2035, 80% of pharmacists will be qualified to prescribe and 80% of pharmacies will be delivering expanded services. That means more consultations, more clinical interventions, and more opportunities to improve health outcomes.

## Major milestones

The Pharmacy Board of Australia's work on an endorsement model for prescribing is another milestone. Organisations representing the entire pharmacy profession have advocated for a model that allows pharmacists to prescribe independently, within a regulated framework that ensures safety, accountability, and collaboration.

It's not about replacing GPs - it's about complementing them. Across the country, prescribing pharmacists are already working hand-in-hand with doctors, sharing patient information, triaging cases, and referring when needed. This is the future of integrated care.

We've also seen the first graduates of the Doctor of Pharmacy program enter the workforce. And we are working with universities to ensure that training to prescribe independently is embedded in the base registerable degree. This will equip graduates with the practical skills they need in modern pharmacy practice. »



**COMMUNITY PHARMACY IS OPEN EARLIER, LATER, AND LONGER THAN ANY OTHER HEALTHCARE PROVIDER."**

Unfortunately, there continues to be misinformation campaigns from groups claiming to represent medical professionals, that ignore study after study proving the pharmacist prescribing is safe.

The evidence is clear: internationally, independent prescribing by pharmacists has been proven to reduce GP wait times, lower hospital admissions, and improve access to care. Our patients deserve that.

In 2025, we also made strides in digital transformation. The Guild's upcoming Green and White Papers on AI in community pharmacy will explore how artificial intelligence can support pharmacists, from dispensing automation to clinical decision support. AI won't replace pharmacists, but it will enhance their ability to deliver safe, efficient, and personalised care.

### On the horizon

Looking ahead to 2026, our focus will be on implementation. We'll work with governments, regulators, and education providers to embed prescribing into the base registerable degree. We'll support pharmacists through training, accreditation, and practice change. And we'll continue to advocate for a healthcare system that recognises pharmacy as a central pillar, not an afterthought.

We will start to reap the benefit of the PSA's acquisition of the Australasian College of Pharmacy that will simplify training, streamline professional development and advance the future of healthcare.

Next year also brings us closer to a historic milestone: the Guild's centenary in 2027. For nearly 100 years, the Guild has given community pharmacists a voice in government, a platform for progress, and a network of support. As we approach that milestone, we reflect not just on what we've achieved, but on what's still possible.

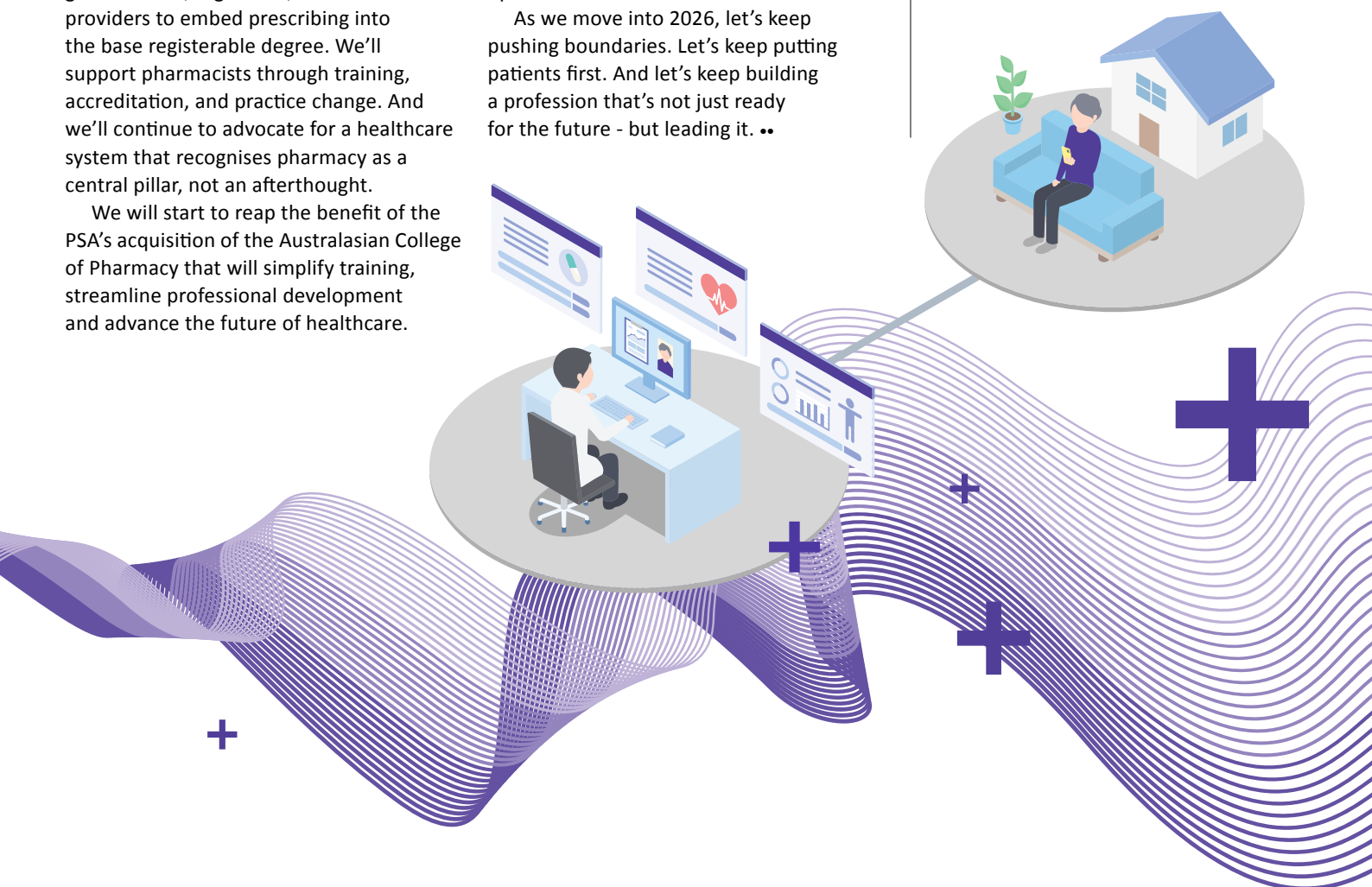
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I'm proud of what we've accomplished in 2025. I'm inspired by the pharmacists who continue to innovate, advocate, and care - day in, day out. And I'm optimistic about what lies ahead.

As we move into 2026, let's keep pushing boundaries. Let's keep putting patients first. And let's keep building a profession that's not just ready for the future - but leading it. ..



**IT'S NOT ABOUT REPLACING GPS - IT'S ABOUT COMPLEMENTING THEM."**



## INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

## TALKIN' 'BOUT A REVOLUTION



As the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's **Fei Sim** wraps up her tenure as National President, she reflects on the highlights of the past year for the industry.

INTERVIEW BY **KARINA BRAY**

“I already know and feel that 2026 will be another tremendous year!” declared Pharmaceutical Society of Australia National President Fei Sim.

While Sim's role as National President is coming to an end this year, with Professor Mark Naunton taking over from January 2026, the pharmacy leader will still play a significant role in the association and her advocacy work within the sector will continue.

Here, she shares with *Pharmacy Daily* just a few of the highlights of 2025 for the pharmacy sector.

#### A seat at the table

“I feel quite strongly about pharmacists being at the right tables wherever and whenever decisions are made,” Sim said. “What I have really focused on in the last three-and-a-half years is trying to understand how our health system works - who are the movers and shakers, policy makers, and the decision makers?”

“Our health system in Australia is quite complex, and we've really put in the effort to understand the bureaucracy and the dynamics to allow a seat at the table for pharmacists.”

For example, when the government announced plans to commission a scope of practice review to look at how the industry can unleash the potential of all health professionals, the PSA immediately saw a need to get involved, Sim added.

The organisation is also sharing its insights with other committees, such as the Primary Care and Workforce panel, the National Women's Health Council, and the Strengthening Medicare Implementation Oversight Committee.

“What I'm emphasising here is that we need to continue our engagement with not just the government, but also the departments, because often that's when a lot of the discussions are being had and where it involves large stakeholders,” said Sim.

“It's very important to have pharmacists' voices there to give accurate information about pharmacists, but also around how we can contribute across our health system and dispel any myths and misconceptions.”

Sim is a big believer that pharmacists cannot continue to practice in silos, but must collaborate with GPs and other allied health professionals within a multidisciplinary team.

“This is regardless of your area of practice. This is about the work that we do. Patients deserve a person-centered and multi-disciplinary team approach.

“People living in Australia should expect to receive health care when and where they'd like, in an equitable, timely, and affordable manner. Existing infrastructure, such as community pharmacies, should be utilised and empowered, considering their reach and network,” she observed.

#### Training the next generation of pharmacists

When the PSA officially announced the signing of the agreement to acquire the Australasian College of Pharmacy in October, Sim described it as “a transformational opportunity for the future of pharmacy education”, marking an expansion of educational offerings for the industry.

It also demonstrated a shared commitment between both organisations to support the advancement of the profession and guide pharmacists throughout their careers.

“This is a significant achievement, not just for the PSA, but for the whole profession,” she said. »



“It means that within a resource-constrained environment, we will be able to focus our resources and invest in education and training to upskill our workforce, so that together, we can build capability and capacity and be agile [enough] to meet the fast-evolving landscape affecting pharmacists and pharmacy assistants.”

Outside the acquisition of the college, the PSA has invested heavily in education and training, including the development of training for pharmacist prescribing, aged care onsite pharmacists, and medication management review, as well as support for scope expansion.

Given there is no national harmonisation and pharmacists’ scope of practice differs across the jurisdictions, it makes offering nationwide training at scale a challenge for the PSA.

“We felt that pharmacists, regardless of where they reside, should get support that is tailored to their needs,” said Sim.

“I’m really proud of the provision of the suite of education that PSA has delivered over the years, and I acknowledge the incredible work of the PSA Team.”

### Driving innovation through QUM

When Sim first joined the PSA, she felt very strongly about the board doing as much as it could to continue to drive the quality use of medicines (QUM) through innovation and partnerships, especially as medicine safety is Australia’s 10th national health priority.

She acknowledges the legacy and work of her predecessors, including A/Prof Shane Jackson and A/Prof Chris Freeman, who first drove this agenda.

In 2025 alone, the organisation delivered over 40 projects with over 30 partnerships to support QUM.

These projects included the Primary Care Access Program developed with the Healthy North Coast Primary Health Network to improve timely GP access and reduce avoidable emergency department demand.

Others included the rollout of practical

tools, training and national workshops to offer guidance through vaping reforms and the development of the ASPIRE program to build capability and pilot pharmacist roles in community palliative care teams.

The PSA also partnered with academic institutions in research and education, such as Medicines Advice Initiative Australia, the Quality Use of Medicines Alliance, and Quality Use of Medicines for Insomnia and Sleep Health and Medical Research Future Fund collaborations.

“These partnerships and projects are critical because they drive innovation, but they also generate evidence that our profession needs to demonstrate the impact of our work as pharmacists in driving QUM and medicine safety,” said Sim.

“The exponential growth of PSA’s partnerships is a testament to the collaborative efforts of the team at PSA. Our staff are our biggest asset and the ‘engine room’ for making all these happen. It also shows the status of the PSA as the preferred partner for QUM innovation.”

### Support through the PSA Foundation

Established on World Pharmacist Day last year, charitable entity, the PSA Foundation, now has over a million dollars in total assets under management and is currently fully operational, said Sim proudly.

This year, the Foundation funded its first grant, Mental Health First Aid training for 26 pharmacists, who reported “overwhelmingly positive feedback, high relevance to practice, increased confidence applying MHFA principles, and greater readiness to ask direct, safety-critical questions”, according to PSA’s annual report.

The Foundation has undertaken a number of other philanthropic activities, including supporting the Shark Tank initiative at PSA 25 to support innovation in the sector, as well as partnering with the Wilson Foundation to distribute the Maudsley Deprescribing Guidelines, all of



**WE’RE REALLY SEEING A  
SIGNIFICANT PARADIGM  
SHIFT IN THE WAY WE  
PRACTISE PHARMACY.”**

which were aimed to empower pharmacists to improve disease-state management.

Plenty more initiatives for the Foundation are on the horizon for 2026, Sim explained.

### A place to call home

“I’m really proud that for the very first time in history, we have membership numbers surpassing 20,000, and it continues to grow,” noted Sim.

“It is important to stay united as a profession, because our practice is changing so quickly and there are so many challenges along the way. If we can be there to support each other, that can only be good.”

“Seeing more pharmacists building loyalty towards the PSA and really seeing it as their home means a lot to me, and it’s really pleasing that we’re able to meet the growing and very rapidly evolving needs of pharmacists.” »



"Everything that we were able to achieve was only made possible because we worked together - everyone from the PSA Board, CEO, PSA staff, Branch Committees, CSIs, along with key pharmacy stakeholders and peak bodies, and members of the profession. We need to keep this momentum and never lose sight of the goal."

### Looking ahead

"Everybody has used the word 'evolution' in pharmacy practice, but I would actually use the word 'revolution'," said Sim.

"We're really seeing a significant paradigm shift in the way we practise pharmacy. In 2025, we saw the expansion of pharmacists' scope and increasing support from jurisdictions for pharmacists [to] practise to our full scope. But in 2026, this momentum will continue, largely driven by real patient and health system needs."

As Sim pointed out, given Australia's aging population, medication use is on the rise, and pharmacists play a critical role in improving access to care and medicine safety.

"There are 41,000 registered pharmacists that we need to upskill, and let's not forget the other 50,000 or so pharmacy assistants and pharmacy staff," she said.

"But we will also look to support universities across the country to help modernise the pharmacy degree offerings so they can produce graduates who are ready to step up and undertake this expanded scope. The PSA is ready."

"I am very confident about our new governance leadership, which will be led by President-elect, Professor Mark Naunton MPS, Bridget Totterman MPS and Caroline Diamantis FPS," she said.

"I call on members of our profession to get behind and support Mark, Bridget and Caroline." ••



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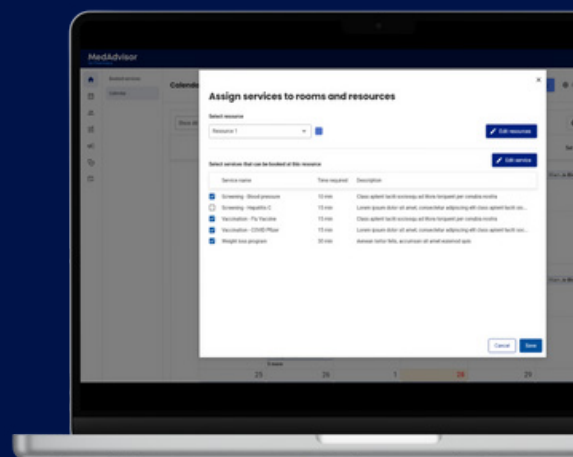
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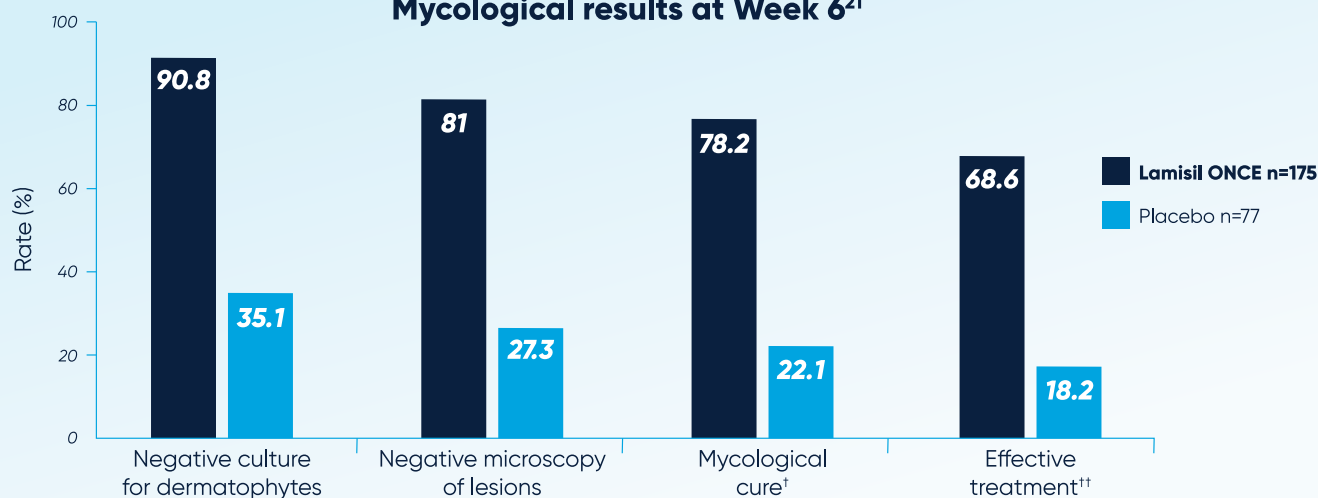
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For patients treated with Lamisil Once **>87.5% are unlikely to relapse within 3 months**

78.2% of patients showed mycological cure<sup>†</sup> with Lamisil ONCE 6 weeks after application<sup>\*21</sup>

#### Mycological results at Week 6<sup>21</sup>



Multicentre, randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled phase 3 trial, in which patients with tinea pedis applied Lamisil ONCE or placebo once on both feet. Patients with missing data were excluded from this analysis.<sup>21</sup> \*Compared to Lamisil 1% Cream. †Mycological cure is defined as negative results on both culture and microscopy of samples taken from lesions.<sup>21</sup>

††Effective treatment combines mycological cure and clinical improvement criteria.

To find out more, visit [Lamisil.com.au](http://Lamisil.com.au) or call 02 8878 9777 to talk to your Pharmabroker representative.

Always read the label and follow the directions for use.

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## INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

## LEADING THE WAY



Wesfarmers Health Chief Customer Officer **Richard Pearson** takes a look back at the highlights of 2025 for the business and what's in store for its brands.

INTERVIEW BY JO-ANNE HUI-MILLER

### *Pharmacy Daily:* How would you describe the past year for Wesfarmers Health?

**Richard Pearson:** We feel that 2025 was a really positive year for Weshealth and for the pharmacy sector at large. To give you an overview, we've seen a sector in strong growth. We see quite buoyant morale amongst the franchise partners and owners on the back of the 8CPA and the progress that the industry is making in scope of practice.

To summarise that, we have a lot of franchise partners who are interested in buying more Pricelines and growing their business, rather than selling or exiting, so we take that as a very big positive vote of confidence in the sector.

From a Wesfarmers Health point of view, we feel really pleased with the progress we're making in the business. We've delivered good growth for our franchise partners, which obviously is very important, so we reflect on the year with a lot of pride and positivity.

### *PD:* What were some of the major highlights of the year?

**RP:** We feel really good about how we've relaunched, modernised and rejuvenated the Priceline brand, and we think that's translating really well in our marketing, but also in terms of our physical stores and website. We feel from an omnichannel and customer connection point of view, the brand relaunch has been successful.

We're really proud of what we think is a market-leading program on menopause. There's a huge unmet customer need there, and this really defines where Priceline wins - the combination of excellent pharmacist service and expertise, epitomised by our unique program of training with the Jean Hailes Foundation, combined with what we hope is a market-leading retail product solution with menopause-relevant products, which have been curated by our chief pharmacist.

It's the start of a multi-year program that will really differentiate Priceline and give it a leading edge in the market. We're very proud of it. »





## INTERVIEW



### PD: What are some Priceline's strengths at the moment?

We're very proud of Sister Club. We've made huge improvements to the customer experience, and we're going to have some really exciting news in the new year when we reach our 10 millionth member. We're not quite there yet, but early in 2026, that's going to be a big milestone.

Our e-commerce business is growing really quickly. And early in 2026, we're going to launch what we intend to be a market-leading app to bring together loyalty, e-commerce, shopping, prescription management and health services management, which will take our digital customer connection to a whole new level.

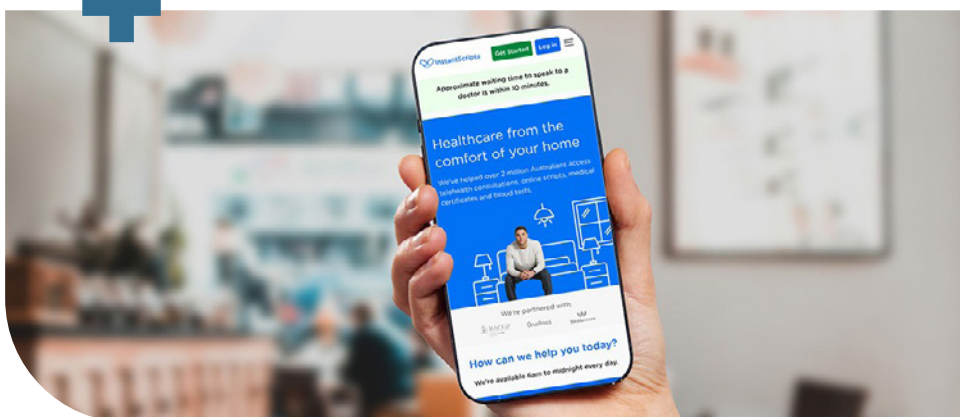
If I then go a level deeper, we're making really good progress playing the leading role in terms of scope of practice development. We've relaunched our pharmacist master class program and we're growing our intern program all the time. We have a \$2,000 subsidy program for our pharmacists, who are going through their scope of practice training, which is a positive step. From a health services and dispense point of view, we're making good strides.

From a retail point of view, our value program has really stepped [up]. We're [offering] a lot more loyalty value in terms of deals that are only accessible to Sister Club members. The goodie bags that we offer several times a year have gone from strength to strength and we're really proud of that. The sales that have caused huge excitement in the market, like \$10 mascaras and \$10 lipsticks, are real groundbreaking value events.

We're proud of the acceleration of our private label offer. Our sub brand, illi, is growing really well, and that's something that is bringing great innovation to the market and winning awards from a design and innovation point of view.



**TO BE A WORLD-CLASS RETAILER, I THINK YOU ALSO HAVE TO BE A WORLD-CLASS OMNICHANNEL RETAILER.**



We continue to bring new brands to the market that give Priceline a really strong point of difference and we're very proud of our K beauty offer. We're very proud of how we brought Boeuf into the haircare sector, which has been one of our fastest growing brands, and we've also brought real innovation into cosmetics with brands like Made by Mitchell. We continue to strengthen our retail offer, and feel really proud of the differentiation we have there.

From a family brand's point of view, obviously, Priceline is very much our crown jewel, but we now have three pilot stores under the InstantScripts Pharmacy Health Hub, which are going really well, and we're really excited about where that could go in the future.

Obviously, we now own Pharmacy For Less as well, which is a discount brand. So when you take a step back, we now believe confidently that we have a pharmacy brand which is relevant for any pharmacy site in the market. We really hope that will help to accelerate our network growth over the next year as well.

### PD: How competitive do you feel the retail landscape in pharmacy is?

RP: I see it as a really positive market. We play in categories that are growing in the beauty and the health sector and the dispense market is growing strongly behind weightloss drugs. We have tailwinds from a product and category performance point of view. »



**THERE ARE OTHER PARTS OF THE FEMALE HEALTH PLATFORM THAT WE WANT TO PLAY A STRONGER PART IN AS WELL.”**



I think it's really exciting in terms of where the industry is going over the next few years, as pharmacists continue to increase their scope of practice and play an important role in community health, and we expand and grow in the market. Both from a traditional pharmacy point of view and modernisation of future growth angle, the pharmacy sector is well placed.

To be a world-class retailer, I think you also have to be a world-class omnichannel retailer. At Priceline Pharmacy and Wesfarmers Health, we're doing a lot to augment that in-store experience with strong digital capability across ecommerce loyalty and our app - to become a genuine player as an omnichannel retail pharmacy [business].

**PD: We've talked about the importance of menopause to Priceline, but are there any other significant issues on your radar at the moment for the business?**

**RP:** We're ambitious for 2026 and we see strong growth in the next year. We want to be a leading player in the women's health sector. Obviously, menopause is a strong part of that, but there are other parts of the female health platform that we want to play a stronger part in as well, and that's heavily supported by the government, both at state and federal level. We're onto a positive platform there.

We want to continue to invest in network growth, both in terms of new sites, and investing in the sites we have to modernise and improve - where we are doing those refurbishments, we're seeing really strong results, so that gives us optimism.

We've talked about scope of practice. We want to continue to develop our own capabilities, as well as play a leading role across the industry. We'll continue to bring new brands and value programs to the retail market, which hopefully will give more and more customers more reasons to shop with us more frequently, which obviously is how we help our franchise business build ever stronger businesses as well.

**PD: Late last year, Wesfarmers Health launched a new beauty retail brand Atomica, which has now opened several stores around Australia. How is that tracking?**

**RP:** We're trying to build the business in a measured and considered way. We're really pleased with how the six pilot stores are going. We believe in the customer opportunity, which is delivering a market-leading service and expertise in the beauty sector, but with affordable prices, so it's accessible to everyone, not just a small number of people.

But we're also very conscious that we want to grow and develop the business in a way that is complementary and compatible with a really strong retail pharmacy business as well so there isn't competition between the brands from a location or a marketing point of view. What we are already doing is having some success with bringing new brands to the market through Atomica, which gives them a foothold in the Australian market and then allows us to take them into the Priceline business as well, which is a really neat win. ••





# 2025 IN REVIEW:

+ A LOOK BACK AT THE **BIGGEST STORIES** OF THE YEAR.



## MEDICINE SHORTAGES ADD TO PHARMACISTS' STRAIN

January saw medicine shortages have a significant impact on Australian pharmacists, with more than nine in 10 reporting frequent delays in patient treatment due to low stock.

After conducting a national survey, the University of South Australia (UniSA) found that medicine shortages were increasing patient stress as well as pharmacists' workloads, with almost 90% being forced to source medicines from non-regular wholesalers at least weekly.

At that time, there were 419 medicines affected, particularly those relating to weight loss, ADHD, cholesterol and hormone patches.

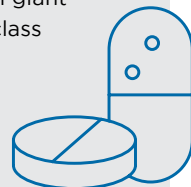
"Medicine shortages not only place an operational strain on pharmacists but also create ethical dilemmas. Pharmacists must navigate between ensuring equitable access and maintaining regulatory compliance, often with limited resources," said UniSA lecturer in pharmacy, Dr Jack Janetzki. ••

## Pharmacy giant *accused of duping customers*

In the lead up to Christmas last year, Johnson & Johnson was hit with a class action by Brisbane law firm JGA Saddler, which argued that the company knowingly sold "ineffective" cold and flu medicine to Australians under its Codral, Sudafed and Benadryl brands.

The medicines all contain the drug phenylephrine, which is marketed and sold as a decongestant, despite decades of evidence showing it does not work as claimed. JGA Saddler asked all Australians who purchased any of the 20 Johnson & Johnson products included in the lawsuit since 2005 to register for the class action.

The pharmaceutical giant has since denied the class action's claims, saying research indicated the phenylephrine-containing products worked. ••



## A BLEAK PICTURE FOR KIDS' *medicine safety*

Closing out the month, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) released a report that revealed serious medicine-related problems in children and adolescents and called for the country's health system to be better equipped to deal with medicine safety challenges.

According to the 'Medicine safety: Child and adolescent care' report, nearly 34,000 children present to emergency departments each year - around 93 per day - due to medicine-related problems, with around 40 admitted to hospitals, costing the economy in excess of \$130 million per year.

PSA made several recommendations, including the implementation of a national incident reporting and learning system and mandatory indication on prescriptions for children and adolescents. ••





## PHARMACISTS CELEBRATED ON AUSTRALIA DAY

Several pharmacy professionals were recognised with awards on Australia Day, including NSW pharmacist Anna Barwick, who received a Medal of the Order of Australia. Barwick, who works as a pharmacist in Walcha, also founded the advisory service PharmOnline. PSA National President Associate Professor Fei Sim described her as “a pioneer of innovation”.

PD conducted an exclusive interview with Barwick, who said it was “an absolute honour” to receive the OAM early in her career.

“I feel like I still need to earn this recognition, so I’ll keep advocating for pharmacists and rural health,” she shared.

Meanwhile, SA pharmacists Sobia and Irfan Hashmi were recipients of the South Australia Local Hero award, while Dr Craig Rayner was appointed as a Companion of the Order of Australia in recognition of his service to pharmacology. ••

## 60DD NOT DOOMSDAY AFTER ALL

After much outcry from the Pharmacy Guild of Australia about the Federal Government’s 60-day double dispensing policy, which was introduced in September 2023, the Department of Health and Ageing released figures showing that the number of pharmacy closures in the eight months after its implementation was significantly fewer than predicted.

When lobbying against the policy in 2023, Guild President Trent Twomey said “as many as 20,000 jobs will be lost, 665 pharmacies will close and Australia’s most vulnerable patients will suffer under the Albanese Government’s 60-day dispensing policy”.

The bleak prediction did not come to pass however, with only 22 pharmacies across the country closed between 01 September 2023 and 30 November 2024. ••



## NEW CSI FOR HOSPITAL PHARMACISTS

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia announced its Hospital Pharmacy Practice Community of Specialty Interest (CSI), a new forum focused on strengthening support for pharmacists practising in hospitals.

Chaired by leading hospital pharmacist Professor Michael Dooley and with an experienced team of hospital pharmacy leaders at the helm, the CSI addresses

emerging practice needs through collaboration and knowledge sharing.

The CSI is dedicated to improving care in hospitals, including embedding pharmacists within healthcare teams, facilitating pharmacist prescribing within collaborative care models and improving pharmacist stewardship of medicine management to improve outcomes of transitions. ••

## TWO PHARMACY GIANTS BECOME ONE



In one of the industry's most hotly anticipated announcements of the year, the Sigma-Chemist Warehouse merger was officially completed. *PD* followed the development since the merger was first mooted in December 2023.

Shareholders voted to approve the merger at the end of January 2025, and just a couple of weeks later, Sigma confirmed that its acquisition of 100% of the issued shares in CW Group Holdings Limited (Chemist Warehouse) by way of scheme of arrangement was finalised.

All eyes were on the stock market at the time, and as we went to press that day, shares were trading at \$2.86 – today, they are sitting at \$3.12. ••

## BETTER TOGETHER: PSA AND GOVT TEAM UP

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) and the Australian Government announced that they had begun negotiations on the first dedicated agreement on pharmacy programs.

Set to cover a range of pharmacy programs that no longer sit within the 8th Community Pharmacy Agreement, the agreement meant the PSA and the Commonwealth would begin working together to bolster programs that pharmacists deliver across the health system.

PSA National President Associate Professor Fei Sim said the agreement was an opportunity to reform programs to ensure they are fit-for-purpose, now and into the future. Mark Butler, Minister for Health, added that the new agreement would support the Government's ongoing commitment to improving patient health outcomes and providing cheaper medicines. ••



## + PHARMACISTS SHED LIGHT ON LONELINESS

There was an emphasis this month on how community pharmacists can make a difference in the mental wellbeing of Australians, with the PSA and Pharmacy Addressing Loneliness and Social isolation (PALS) teaming up to shed light on how the profession is uniquely positioned to help address loneliness.

The two organisations presented evidence to the NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues regarding its inquiry into the prevalence, causes and impacts of loneliness in NSW.

Pharmacists engage with patients an average of 18 times each year, PALS pointed out in its submission, and given their trusted status, have significant opportunities to help identify, screen for, address and prevent loneliness. PALS made four recommendations, including funding to support the rollout of its world-first pharmacist training program on loneliness through NSW. ••





## Guild: *Medicines are not a luxury*

As cost-of-living pressures continue, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia called on the Government to help make medicines more affordable.

The peak body revealed that more people were delaying filling prescriptions due to cost, with one in five Aussies doing so in the past three years – a number that rose to one in three people in some regional parts of the country.

“Australians are being forced to make tough choices between filling prescriptions and paying the rent, buying groceries and putting petrol in the car,” said Pharmacy Guild of Australia National Councillor, Mario Barone.

As part of its Affordable Medicines Now campaign, the Guild suggested that the Government reduce its general co-payment to help tackle the growing issue. ••

## DON'T FORGET ABOUT US, ADPHA SAYS

The Federal Government's announcement of a \$1.7 billion boost for hospitals and health services in February was welcome news for the Advanced Pharmacy Australia (AdPha), which urged states and territories to direct a portion of the funding to bolster the hospital pharmacy workforce.

AdPha President Tom Simpson said it is vital that hospital pharmacists are included, given they are key to reducing wait lists, minimising ED waiting times and managing ramping - the key aims of the cash injection.

Simpson also pointed out that the role of hospital pharmacists in supporting safer patient discharges and transitions of care is becoming increasingly important, considering hospital admissions are rising each year. ••



The TerryWhite Chemmart IMPACT conference took place this month, showcasing the dedication and excellence of its community and attended by more than 1,000 delegates.

Attendees immersed themselves in the future of pharmacy, exploring a rapidly evolving landscape shaped by changing customer and patient expectations, innovative store design, and an expanding scope of practice.

Key announcements made during the conference included major enhancements to the myTWC health app and the e-commerce experience, a refreshed store design optimised for full scope, the rollout of electronic shelf labels, and the implementation of a new clinical governance platform.

The TWC National Pharmacy of the Year was awarded to TerryWhite Chemmart Noraville, NSW. Meanwhile, the prestigious Rhonda White Leadership Award went to Karen Brown of Arana Hills, Qld. ••



## PM SHARES GOOD NEWS AT APP2025

Attendees at the APP2025 on the Gold Coast were surprised by a visit from Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. Taking to the stage during the Opening Plenary, the PM declared that Australia's health system "is the envy of the world, and we need to defend it and protect it", also acknowledging the "absolutely vital and central role" that pharmacists play.

Albanese went on to announce the prescription co-payment reduction to \$25, commencing 01 January 2026 - a reform that will make PBS scripts cheaper than at any time in the last two decades. ••



## AdPha commits to DEI

Advanced Pharmacy Australia (AdPha) kicked off March on a positive note with its first-ever Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy, released just before International Women's Day. The plan defined diversity, equity and inclusion in the context of the organisation's people and purpose, while outlining six years of action toward inclusive leadership, diverse workforce and workplace culture, community collaboration and partnerships.

"Embracing diversity, championing equity, and fostering inclusivity create meaningful impacts - not just for pharmacists and their teams, but for every patient in their care," AdPha Vice President Dr Kate O'Hara explained.

"The strategy encompasses four clear goals relating to inclusive leadership, workplace diversity, community collaboration and partnerships and advocacy, in our pursuit of health and social equity." ••



## PHARMACISTS RECEIVE APPLAUSE

Pharmacists were showered with appreciation on Thank You Pharmacist Day, with the PSA celebrating the 40,000 pharmacists around Australia. This year's theme, 'Pharmacists Stepping Up', recognised their dedication and impact across all areas of practice and in all corners of the country.

"Pharmacists continue to step up to meet new challenges, delivering more

vaccinations, expanding acute care services, improving medication management, and championing quality use of medicines in aged care residents," said PSA National President Associate Professor Fei Sim.

"We are doing more than ever to keep Australians healthy."

She also encouraged community members to thank their pharmacists - not only on this day, but in every interaction. ••

## Blue skies ahead for Sigma

PD broke the news of Sigma Healthcare Limited's financial results for the year ending 31 January, with the company posting a 45.7% jump in statutory net revenues to \$4.8 billion, along with a non-recurring after-tax loss due to its merger with Chemist Warehouse Group.

At the same time, the group displayed a united front at the 2025 Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference and Trade Exhibition (APP2025), where all three major franchise brands - Amcal, Chemist Warehouse and Discount Drug Stores - enjoyed a strong presence.

Sigma Healthcare CEO and Managing Director Vikesh Ramsunder lauded the conference as an opportunity to "showcase our combined strengths". ••

## » QLD EXPANDED SCOPE PILOT NOW PERMANENT

In a landmark decision for the state, Queensland's Minister for Health, Tim Nicholls, announced at APP2025 that pharmacist-prescribing for a range of acute conditions would become a permanent fixture of its health system.

The news came off the back of the successful 12-month Queensland Community Pharmacy Pilot, which enabled pharmacists to undertake specialised training to prescribe for a range of conditions. PSA Queensland President Shane MacDonald described the announcement as "a win for patients" and a "a testament to the quality of care pharmacists deliver".

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) was less thrilled about the news, however, suggesting the Queensland Government was "prioritising retail politics and pharmacy owners over patient health and safety". ••





## DOCTOR OF PHARMACY PRACTICE TRAINING TO LAUNCH

This month, the University of Western Australia (UWA) announced it will offer Australia's first Doctor of Pharmacy Practice, a pioneering one-year online program designed specifically for registered pharmacists seeking to enhance their qualifications and expand their scope of practice.

The program meets the requirements for using the title Doctor of Pharmacy

and can be completed entirely online, making it accessible to practicing pharmacists nationwide.

Senior lecturer at UWA's School of Allied Health and pharmacist, Dr Amy Page, said the program will "address a critical need in the pharmacy profession", providing a comprehensive course that incorporates numerous separate training pathways into one recognised qualification. ••

## FIXING UP GENDER-BASED UNDERVALUATION

An investigation by the Fair Work Commission into gender-based undervaluation in the health and care sector determined that pharmacy and some other occupations were negatively affected.

To rectify the undervaluation, it granted a total increase in minimum award wage rates of 14.1% over three years, to be implemented in three phases from 30 June 2025, 30 June 2026 and 30 June 2027.

"This is an historic and welcome decision from the Fair Work Commission," Health Services Union (HSU) National Secretary Lloyd Williams said.

"The health, care and support sectors are critical, and most of the people performing the essential roles in these sectors are women," he noted.

"Boosting the minimum award rates for these workers is well overdue and will make a huge difference for members in the current cost-of-living crisis." ••

## TRIBUTES FOR PROF GABRIELLE COOPER

Professor Gabrielle Cooper, one of Australia's most esteemed pharmacists, passed away after a short illness on 23 April.

PSA National President Associate Professor Fei Sim was among those paying tribute to Professor Cooper and her substantial contribution to the practice of pharmacy in Australia.

"All of us at PSA are deeply saddened to learn of Gabrielle's passing," she said.

"A visionary ahead of her time, Gabrielle leaves a substantial legacy, which ranges from forging new practice pathways for pharmacists in general practice, to establishing the Discipline of Pharmacy at the University of Canberra and to research that altered clinical guidelines for activated charcoal in drug overdose."

Associate Professor Sim extended condolences to Gabrielle's family, friends and colleagues "grieving the loss of such an inspirational and special woman". ••



## Better hospital prescribing for Qld

Queensland is introducing state-wide Collaborative Medication Prescribing (CPMP), allowing pharmacists to prescribe certain medicines in collaboration with a doctor or nurse practitioner in both public and private hospitals.

Changes to the Medicines and Poisons (Medicines) Regulation 2021 will pave the way for the statewide rollout of CPMP.

This includes charting medicines for administration in inpatient settings and prescribing medicines for supply to patients on discharge or in an outpatient setting.

Advanced Pharmacy Australia (AdPha) and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) have welcomed the move and applauded the Queensland Government for its nation-leading reform. ••



## NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM FOR PSA FIRST NATIONS CSI

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pharmacy Practice (ATSIPP) Community of Specialty Interest (CSI) underwent a leadership change, with the group now chaired by respected pharmacist and proud Nywaigi Mamu woman, Chastina Heck.

The ATSIPP CSI plays an important role in championing culturally safe pharmacy practices, supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pharmacists, and improving health outcomes across communities.

"I am excited to bring together this leadership group who bring with them a vast knowledge of real-world experience to guide the path ahead," Heck said.

"As pharmacists, we continue to create real change in the way healthcare is delivered for our First Nations people and communities," she added.

The group brings together expertise from across practice settings and communities, including the inaugural NAPSA Indigenous Chair, Shi-Anne Wallace. ••



## CALL TO FUND GP-BASED PHARMACISTS

In the lead up to the election, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) and Royal Australian College of GPs (RACGP) joined forces to call on major parties to fund general practice-based pharmacists to work with specialist GPs to support high-quality prescribing and quality use of medicines.

The measure could deliver around \$545 million in net savings to the health system over four years through fewer hospital admissions and reduced medicine use.

Non-dispensing pharmacists in general practice answer queries, monitor prescribing, conduct medicine reviews, help patients understand their medicines, and ensure safe and effective use of medicines.

"People with chronic illness get the best care when their specialist GP works with pharmacists and other health professionals in multidisciplinary care teams," said RACGP President Dr Michael Wright. ••

## New federal ministers announced

A post-election cabinet reshuffle saw Mark Butler reappointed Minister for Health and Aged Care, with the pharmacy sector welcoming his continuation in the role.

National President Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Professor Trent Twomey, highlighted that Butler had "worked hard to put patients at the heart of his work", particularly with the recent move to make medicine more affordable.

"Continuity will ensure the necessary reforms to healthcare, including expanding the range of services offered in pharmacy, can be taken forward at pace."

In other appointments, pharmacist Emma McBride retained her role as Assistant Minister for Mental Health, Suicide Prevention and Rural and Regional Health; Rebecca White was named Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care; and Olympic sport shooter Dan Repacholi was appointed Special Envoy for Men's Health. ••



Six pharmacy graduates from Charles Darwin University (CDU) have become the first in Australia to be awarded the title of Doctor of Pharmacy.

Accreditation changes were announced by the Federal Government late last year, with students completing extended Master's programs under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 9 able to use the title Doctor of Pharmacy.

CDU's Associate Professor Pharmacy

(Faculty of Health), Heather Volk, said the title recognises the level and length of training required to provide the full range of medication management services - including prescribing - with students completing additional clinical and research studies as part of their learning.

"The introduction of the Doctor of Pharmacy award is an exciting time for the profession," Associate Professor Volk said. ••





## **+** SUNSCREENGATE *continues*

Testing commissioned by consumer organisation Choice revealed 16 of 20 popular SPF50 or 50+ sunscreens had an SPF lower than 50 from brands including Cancer Council, Bondi Sands, Neutrogena, Banana Boat, Nivea, Sun Bum and Bondi Sands.

Meanwhile, Ultra Violette Lean Screen achieved an SPF of only 4 and has since been recalled.

A further two products did not meet the requirements for a claim of SPF50+, which is a test result greater than 60.

The TGA relies on reports provided by manufacturers to ensure the safety, quality and efficacy of sunscreen products, and Choice called on the regulator to carry out its own sunscreen compliance testing.

“Unfortunately, these reports may not be providing the accurate information consumers need when choosing sunscreens for themselves and their families,” said Choice CEO, Ashley de Silva.

Since then, several sunscreens have been recalled, while other brands have paused sales of their products.

Meanwhile, two former employees of leading international testing lab Princeton Consumer Research spoke out about what they alleged is questionable data and testing practices. The lab certifies many Australian sunscreens, and since the investigation, several brands have stopped using their services.

The fallout from the tests continues as this publication went to press. ••



## **TIME TO PREP FOR NEW VAPE STANDARDS**

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) advised that starting 01 July 2025, strengthened standards will come into effect for all therapeutic vaping goods for smoking cessation and nicotine dependence, with pharmacies only able to supply vapes that meet the TGA's stronger safety and quality product standards.

The new standards include stricter requirements for ingredients, flavours, packaging and labelling.

The TGA recommended pharmacists take action to ensure they were prepared for the changes, including reviewing the pharmacy's inventory to identify any non-compliant vape products, and educating staff to ensure they were aware of the new standards, product compliance and availability, and alternative brands.

Non-compliant vapes were to be removed from shelves and disposed of or returned to the supplier. ••

## **AWARD WAGE INCREASE**

The pharmacists' award wage was boosted by a 3.5% increase delivered through the Annual Wage Review by the Fair Work Commission.

The increase was welcomed by Professional Pharmacists Australia, who said the increase was an “important win for our nation's hard-working pharmacists made possible by persistent advocacy and campaigning by union members over many years”.

“This pay rise recognises that pharmacists have suffered a reduction in real wage growth over the last four years as inflation has risen and wages have not kept up,” said a spokesperson for the union.

While acknowledging the increase as a step forward, the union said it did still not match the real value of pharmacists' work, especially as roles and responsibilities continue to expand. ••

## ***Fixed-site pill tests for Melbourne***

In the wake of successful mobile drug checking at five music festivals over summer, where 11% of the samples were not what the user expected, the Victorian Government announced the state's first fixed-site drug-checking service.

The harm reduction measure provides free, confidential advice, detects dangerous synthetic opioids like fentanyl and nitazenes, and can also be used to check the authenticity of pharmaceuticals purchased online.

Professor Suzanne Nielsen, Deputy Director at Monash Addiction Research Centre, welcomed the move, pointing out that fixed-site services in other states had uncovered falsified pharmaceuticals, such as oxycodone or benzodiazepines, that did not contain what was expected. ••



## NEW TAS PHARMACY SUPPORT POLICIES

This month, the Tasmanian Labor Party announced policies that include expanded scope and increased access, hailed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia as “a massive win for patients”.

These included offering after-hours incentives so local pharmacies can stay open for longer, maintaining current pharmacy ownership rules, increasing access to vaccinations and contraception, and reforming interstate prescription regulations.

A new meningococcal B vaccine program for all infants and teenagers will also be introduced.

“Community pharmacies want to do even more for their patients, and this commitment to expanding community pharmacists’ scope of practice, including supporting the training and making these conditions permanent practice, will mean more access to care for more Tasmanians,” said Joe O’Malley, Tasmanian Branch President. ••

## SMALL SHIFT IN SALARIES



According to Raven’s Recruitment’s 2025 Pharmacy Salary and Market Report for Australia and New Zealand, permanent pharmacist salaries have seen only a small increase across rural and metropolitan locations nationally.

“While encouraging, the shift is not as pronounced as many might have hoped, given the ongoing workload and evolving expectations around pharmacist roles,” said

Heidi Dariz, General Manager of Raven’s Recruitment.

An exception is the position of Pharmacist in Charge (PIC), where salaries in all capital cities are now consistently exceeding the \$100,000 threshold.

“This represents a significant psychological and financial milestone for the profession, indicating increased recognition of the PIC’s responsibilities, leadership requirements and operational oversight,” Dariz said. ••



## QLD PHARMS CAN AMEND SCRIPTS

For the first time in Australia, Queensland pharmacists can now swap a medicine for a suitable alternative without needing a doctor’s approval to help solve medicine-related issues.

An update to the *Medicines and Poisons (Medicines) Regulation 2021* (Qld) on 01 Jul specifies that a pharmacist who is dispensing a medicine for a patient “may dispense an equivalent medicine as a substitute to the original medicine stated on the prescription where this is reasonably necessary for the therapeutic treatment of the patient”.

An equivalent medicine is one that appears on the Therapeutic Goods Act 1989 register for the same indication as the original medicine and shares the same (or “substantially similar”) chemical composition or pharmacological mechanism of action. ••



## GEN MEDICINE STANDARDS UPDATED

Advanced Pharmacy Australia (AdPha) released this month an updated pharmacy practice standard for general medicine, setting out professional standards for pharmacists working in one of the largest and most complex areas of acute inpatient care.

The new guidelines emphasise person-centred care, provide clear guidance on prioritising clinical pharmacy services, update recommended staffing ratios and present new evidence demonstrating the impact of pharmacists in general medicine. ••





## GUILD'S VISION PROJECTED TO **SAVE HEALTH SYSTEM \$5.1B**

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia unveiled a strategic plan this month that positions community pharmacies as the cornerstone of the nation's healthcare system.

Towards 2035 sets out a pathway for how the Guild and its members will work to deliver for patients, pharmacists and pharmacies over the next decade.

Modelling suggested that its goals could amount to \$5.1 billion in healthcare savings.

The strategy envisions 80% of community pharmacists and 80% of pharmacies being able to offer additional services to patients over the next decade - examining, diagnosing and treating everyday and long-term health conditions - which would free up 6.5 million GP consultations.

However, Royal Australian College of GPs President Dr Michael Wright expressed his concern that the millions of consults come "at the expense of creating more complex work".

Meanwhile, RACGP Rural Chair Associate Professor Clements said, "The Pharmacy Guild in no way shows any understanding of the risks of what they are suggesting, the harms that come from it, and the idea that somehow they're going to save 6.5 million GP consults is farcical." ••



## Wesfarmers releases results

Wesfarmers released its 2025 full-year results, reporting a net profit after tax of \$2,926 million. The group had a total revenue of \$45.7 billion, up 3.4% on FY24.

Earnings for Wesfarmers Health, which includes Priceline, InstantScripts and API, came in at \$64 million, an increase of 28% on the \$50 million in FY24.

Priceline Pharmacy's headline network sales, including dispensary sales, increased 11.9%.

"Priceline Pharmacy's Retail sales were supported by network expansion, price reductions on key value lines, the launch of new and exclusive brands, and the ongoing contribution of the Sister Club, Australia's largest health and beauty loyalty program with 9.6 million members," the company stated. ••

## SIGMA'S POST-MERGER RESULTS

Sigma recorded normalised EBIT growth of 41% in its first post-merger end-of-year results.

Key figures include like-for-like sales growth of 11.3% across the Australian Chemist Warehouse network, which now comprises 588 stores, according to an ASX statement issued by the company.

"The merger with Chemist Warehouse has delivered a stronger, more integrated healthcare business, with greater scale, capability, and market reach," said Sigma CEO and Managing Director Vikesh Ramsunder.

"The FY25 results demonstrate the group's momentum and potential for ongoing growth."

Ramsunder said supply chain reliability and efficiencies were key to the group's success, with the benefit of scale resulting in a reduction of 11% per unit cost to serve. ••



## PSA25 EXCELLENCE AWARDS ANNOUNCED

The winners of the 2025 PSA Symbion Excellence Awards were announced at PSA25.

Jaimee Anderson was named PSA Symbion Pharmacist of the Year for her leadership, innovation, and "unwavering commitment to the health and wellbeing of the Katherine community".

Anderson played a key role in the rollout of NT's pharmacy-based vaccination services, then became involved in primary healthcare teams working with First Nations people.

She is now the pharmacist CDE at Wurli Wurlijang Health Service, providing culturally-safe care for Indigenous clients. ••



## MAJOR NSW REFORMS ANNOUNCED

This month, NSW Premier Chris Minns announced major reforms for the industry, which include universities offering full-scope training and improved access to medications and treatment in the state.

University of Technology Sydney and University of Newcastle will offer full-scope training for community pharmacists from first semester 2026.

Pharmacists around the state will be able to permanently offer treatment for common skin conditions including shingles, impetigo and psoriasis.

The initiative comes off the back of a successful 12-month trial enabling pharmacists to treat minor skin conditions.

In addition, the government is now looking at ways to improve access to antiviral medication to treat influenza.

Currently, these medications can only be accessed through a medical or nurse practitioner.

“By enabling pharmacists to help manage common conditions, we are increasing access to care and relieving pressure on our GPs and the public hospital system,” said Minns. ••



## TRUMP ANNOUNCES 100% TARIFF ON PHARMA IMPORTS

US President Donald Trump announced on social media platform Truth Social a 100% tariff on US imports of branded or patented pharmaceutical products from 01 October.

He offered foreign pharmaceutical companies an out if they build a manufacturing plant in the US.

Australian pharmaceutical exports to the US are worth around \$1.6 billion a year, with plasma and other blood products from CSL being a significant share of that.

CSL share prices dropped sharply after the announcement, before rallying soon after to regain much of the lost ground.

CSL said in a statement it was aware of the tariffs and was “actively monitoring further announcements”. The company also noted that it has a significant manufacturing footprint in the US, and plans further expansion.

“As per previous market guidance, we do not expect any material impact from these tariffs,” the company stated. ••



## Wesfarmers is *all about women*

Priceline Pharmacy launched this month Anything Menopause, an initiative designed to provide women with accessible, informed advice and care around menopause in stores throughout the country.

Every Priceline Pharmacy will have at least one pharmacist or pharmacy assistant trained to deliver menopause support, thanks to accredited menopause education developed in partnership with Jean Hailes for Women's Health.

Women will be able to receive personalised advice in the privacy of a consult room and curated product bays for easy access to symptom-specific solutions.

In addition, women can access SiSU Health Station health checks, which now include menopause-specific health messages, addressing risks like cardiovascular disease, which increases as oestrogen levels drop.

At home, a dedicated online portal provides women and their support networks with educational resources, product guidance and tools for managing systems. ••





## **+** Guild acquires Member Benefits Australia (MBA)

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia successfully acquired the entity Member Benefits Australia (MBA) from StrongRoom AI this month.

The strategic purchase boosts the Guild's commitment to delivering high-value services to its members, who will enjoy access to exclusive discounts, financial services and professional development offerings tailored to pharmacy owners and staff.

All existing MBA staff, customer and supplier partnerships are ongoing.

"This acquisition is about reinvesting in our members and offering existing customers and clients even greater benefits," said Gerard Benedet, Executive Director of Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

"MBA aligns perfectly with our mission to support community pharmacies with innovative, cost-saving, and value-enhancing services," he added.

Strongroom AI Director Joe Zhou thanked the Guild for "a smooth transaction", adding "Member Benefits Australia has found its strongest home within an organisation that has consistently championed its members for nearly a century". ••



## **PARACETAMOL IN PREGNANCY IS SAFE**

Pharmacy peak bodies joined the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and other medical experts confirming that paracetamol is safe to take in pregnancy, off the back of US President Trump's claims that it causes autism.

"In Australia, the TGA has reiterated that paracetamol remains Pregnancy Category A in Australia, meaning it is considered safe for use in pregnancy," a Pharmacy Guild of Australia spokesperson told *Pharmacy Daily*. ••



## **PATY announced**

Jessica Brown, from Emerald Village Pharmacy in Melbourne, was named the Pharmacy Guild of Australia/Maxigesic 2025 Pharmacy Assistant of the Year (PATY).

Brown told *Pharmacy Daily* she was "proud and honoured to be awarded the national winner for pharmacy assistant of the year".

"The trophy and the title are great, but to me it's more about the recognition of my hard work and dedication to the pharmacy industry," she said.

"I am looking forward to jumping in the deep end of the next 12 months," she enthused. ••



## Teaming up on prescriber submission

In October, pharmacy peak bodies recommended a model of pharmacist prescribing that prioritises patient access, safety and convenience while delivering potential savings of over \$600 million annually.

In a joint open submission to the Pharmacy Board of Australia, Advanced Pharmacy Australia, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia proposed a framework that would allow pharmacists to prescribe medicines autonomously, within their scope of practice.

The Board announced in September that it had begun work to establish an endorsement for scheduled medicines for pharmacists, which when approved, will support a consistent, safe and nationally coordinated approach to pharmacist prescribing.

The submission would enable qualified pharmacists to administer, obtain, possess, prescribe, sell, supply or use Schedule 2, 3, 4 and 8 medicines after completing an approved course. ••



## Shingles awareness

New research commissioned by GSK Australia has found that while most Australians aged 50-69 are aware of shingles (herpes zoster) risk factors and potential impact, many underestimate the likelihood of contracting the condition.

The pharmaceutical company behind the Shingrix vaccine is urging Australians aged 50 years and over to learn more about the signs, symptoms and risk factors for shingles, and seek more information from a pharmacist or their GP. ••



## PHARMACISTS, DOCTORS JOIN FORCES ON MED CANNABIS

Peak health bodies joined forces this month, calling on the NSW Government to act on rogue operators prescribing and dispensing medicinal cannabis.

The NSW branches of the PSA, Guild, Royal Australian College of GPs, and Australian Medical Association wrote open letters to NSW Health Minister Ryan Park and Health Minister Mark Butler calling for action against rogue operators prescribing and dispensing medicinal cannabis.

The peak bodies warned of poor regulatory oversight, major conflicts of interest around prescribing and dispensing, inappropriate prescribing, and a focus on profit over quality healthcare. ••

## EXPANDED OPTOMETRY PRESCRIBING

A proposal by the Optometry Board of Australia to change prescribing rules for optometrists could see them prescribing oral medicines from an approved list to treat potentially sight-threatening eye conditions, bacterial eye infections, eye allergies and short-term eye pain.

The Guild welcomed the proposal, recognising it as another positive step towards improving patient access to timely, affordable, and effective care.

Optometrists are currently permitted to prescribe topical medicines, and the move to extend this to oral medicines would provide greater access for patients, particularly in rural and remote areas where people may have difficulty accessing a GP or ophthalmologist for a prescription. ••

## PSA ACQUIRES AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

The PSA signed an agreement this month to acquire the Australasian College of Pharmacy, marking a significant step for expanding educational offerings and professional and practice support for members and the pharmacy profession.

The acquisition was first proposed in Jan, with PSA members voting in support of the move in February. ••





## GUILD'S TWOMEY NAMED WPC PRESIDENT

Professor Trent Twomey was announced as the new President of the World Pharmacy Council (WPC), succeeding the US National Community Pharmacists Association's Doug Hoey, who had served in the role since 2021.

Twomey previously served as Vice President of the WPC, and is the current National President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

"Geopolitical and financial insecurity combined with falling societal trust in institutions ensure we have a significant challenge," Twomey said of the new role.

"However, I fully believe that we are exceptionally well placed to navigate these threats and turn them into opportunities." ••

## PEAK BODIES CLASH

Peak doctors groups accused the Pharmacy Board of Australia of putting patients at risk of poorer health outcomes by suppressing debate about its proposed endorsement model for autonomous pharmacy prescribing.

In a joint letter to the board this week, the Australian Medical Association (AMA) and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RAGCP) expressed disappointment in the board's "uncollaborative pursuit of widespread pharmacy prescribing", referring to a particular forum held on 30 Oct to discuss the proposal.

However, a spokesperson for the board told *Pharmacy Daily* that further opportunities for consultation and engagement with the AMA and RAGCP are planned, including an open public consultation scheduled to commence late this year and continue into early 2026.

"We acknowledge the longstanding concerns from the medical profession around potential fragmentation of care, conflicts of interest and clinical governance," they said.

"These issues will be a key focus of the consultation and the Board's consideration in preparing a draft registration standard and guidelines for the consideration of Health Ministers." ••



## FIRST NATIONS NETWORK LAUNCHES

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia has announced the establishment of the First Nations Pharmacy Network, led by Linda Burney, a proud Wiradjuri woman and former Minister for Indigenous Australians.

The initiative marks a significant milestone in the Guild's Indigenous health strategy, which aims to embed cultural safety, amplify community voices, and improve health outcomes for First

Nations communities across Australia.

"We know there can be no Closing the Gap without collaboration," said Professor Trent Twomey, Guild National President.

"With the expert guidance of Linda Burney as Chair, we are committed to ensuring culturally safe, accessible, and community-led care remains at the heart of our sector." ••

## Market sentiment *positive*

Demand is strong for pharmacists looking to buy pharmacies, according to the most recent results of the Attain Pharmacy Market Sentiment Survey, with data also suggesting that future supply is likely to increase in the next few years.

Almost half (47%) of pharmacists and pharmacy owners surveyed said they were looking to buy a pharmacy within the next 12 months, and over one-third (37.5%) said they were looking to sell within the next five years.

Attain Director Natalie Sirianni pointed to strong optimism around pharmacy business prices over the next 12 months, with three-quarters of the sample believing that pharmacy business prices will increase over the next 12 months - the highest level since the survey started in July 2020. ••



# Pharmacy Daily

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