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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of industry news, plus a fact sheet from NeedleCalm, and a full page from Independent Pharmacies Australia.

Lead, connect, grow

THE Independent Pharmacies Australia Retail Excellence Conference 2025 is fast approaching, with opportunities to learn about leadership, to connect with fellow retail managers and grow through new insights, knowledge and skills.

Learn more on [page four](#).

Calm needle fears

NEEDLECALM desensitising adhesive pads can help reduce pain and anxiety associated with needle procedures.

See more on [page five](#).

2025 HESTA awards

NOMINATIONS are now open for the 2025 HESTA Excellence Awards, offering health professionals in aged care, allied health, community services and disability services the chance to gain national recognition for their work.

With a \$60,000 prize pool, the awards recognise the exceptional work being done in a range of settings across these four sectors that is positively impacting communities throughout the country.

For more about the awards and how to submit a nomination, see the HESTA awards website [HERE](#).

'Think pharmacy first', Guild urges

WITH the latest Cleanbill Report outlining the cost and difficulty of seeing a GP released yesterday (PD 13 Jan), the Pharmacy Guild of Australia is urging patients to 'think pharmacy first'.

The Guild pointed out that community pharmacies offer accessible care, often with longer weekday and weekend openings, for a range of everyday health conditions and long-term health management.

No one should have to go without the health treatment they need, said Trent Twomey, National President of the Guild.

"Highly trained community pharmacists provide an important service to patients with non-complex everyday health conditions," Twomey said.

"State and federal governments can also make a difference by increasing the range of conditions that can be treated in a pharmacy - and making this consistent across the country.

"No one should have to avoid medical appointments or prescriptions," Twomey said, adding that the Guild's research shows that over the past three years, 21% of Australians - 3.75 million people - have been unable to afford prescription medication because of cost.

"Every day, community pharmacists work closely with GPs, nurses and other allied health practitioners to provide the best possible outcome for patients," Twomey said.

"The Guild will continue to call on the government to make medicine more affordable and reduce the pressure on our doctors and hospitals by offering a cost effective, available, professional alternative," he added.



The Guild noted that community pharmacists can provide a range of vaccines, treat non-complex UTIs (urinary tract infections), resupply oral contraceptives, and in some states and territories, treat other conditions.

The Guild encourages the public to use the FindaPharmacy website to locate the services they need.

The Cleanbill's 2025 Blue Report revealed that the percentage of practices bulk-billing new adult patients without concession cards

has dropped to 21%, while average out-of-pocket costs increased by 4.1% to \$43.38.

On the positive front, the decline in bulk-billing slowed after the government tripled bulk-billing incentives, showing the value of this investment.

Overall, however, the Royal Australian College of GPs (RACGP) said the findings demonstrate a need for the Federal Government to invest in Medicare and increase patient rebates. KB

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TWC: Better business support benefits all

EXCLUSIVE

AS PHARMACY owners face increasing complexity in both healthcare and retail aspects, business support services have never been more important.

TerryWhite Chemmart Executive General Manager Nick Munroe (pictured) told *Pharmacy Daily* that in an environment of evolving customer expectations, heightened competition and an increased role in providing primary healthcare, pharmacy owners need robust, multi-faceted support to stay ahead.

He said the TWC network has a three-pillar approach, encompassing health leadership and innovation; business support; and retail excellence.

“The role of community pharmacies is expanding, with customers now expecting a wide range of clinical services beyond traditional dispensing,” Munroe told *Pharmacy Daily*.

“Programs like CareClinic empower pharmacies to meet these demands by engaging customers with accessible services.”

Backed with best-in-class training, clear policies and procedures, and effective marketing, the aim is to position each TWC pharmacy as a leader in their community.

“By supporting pharmacists to practice confidently at their full scope, we’re helping to shape the future of healthcare delivery,” Munroe said.

Tailored, data-driven business support is essential to navigating the dual complexity of healthcare and retail, and Munroe says TWC

provides pharmacy owners with dedicated business development managers to help create customised business plans designed for business growth.

Industry-leading training programs like Masterclass and Academy help develop the skills of pharmacy teams, ensuring operational efficiency and excellent customer care.

TWC announced last week (*PD 10 Jan*) that its Masterclass Intern Program is available free of charge, allowing all intern pharmacists and preceptors to benefit from insights gained in this valuable educational program.

TWC has also invested in digital solutions, such as myTWC and BuyBetter, designed to drive loyalty and streamline operations.

“myTWC supports pharmacies in delivering convenient, customer-centric services like online script management, eCommerce capabilities, and delivery options, while BuyBetter, our inventory management system, enables owners to optimise stock, reduce costs, and deliver better value to their customers,” Munroe said.

Finally, pharmacists are required to meet ever-increasing customer expectations.

“Accessibility alone is no longer enough to grow a pharmacy business,” Munroe explained.



“Customers expect seamless integration of in-store and digital experiences, allowing them to engage with their pharmacy on their terms and in their time.”

To this end, TWC provides exclusive product ranges, extensive private-label programs and value-driven promotions to meet customer needs while giving pharmacies a competitive edge.

TWC’s partnership with pharmacy owners is about helping the network succeed in an ever-changing landscape.

“When pharmacy owners succeed, their communities benefit,” Munroe said.

Read more from our interview with Nick Munroe in *Pharmacy Daily’s 2024 Year in Review* special report [HERE](#). KB

Bone biosimilars get PBAC tick

SANDOZ, a global leader in generic and biosimilar medicines, has welcomed a positive PBAC recommendation for Jubbonti (denosumab) and Wyost (denosumab) to be included in the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), effective 01 Aug this year.

Jubbonti is approved for treatment of osteoporosis and Wyost for treatment of cancer-related bone diseases.

“We are thrilled to receive a positive recommendation from the PBAC,” said Clint Holland, GM Sandoz ANZ.

“This reflects our dedication to improving patient outcomes through accessible treatment options at Sandoz.

“Jubbonti and Wyost will play a crucial role in the management of osteoporosis and cancer-related bone disease,” he said.

Over 850,000 Australians are affected by osteoporosis, resulting in more than 193,000 bone fractures annually.

Meanwhile, for the 30% of people with breast cancer and 18% with prostate cancer who develop bone metastases during their illness, denosumab can help prevent serious bone complications.

The reference medicine for Jubbonti is Prolia, and for Wyost is Xgeva, with the biosimilars approved for the same indications.



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TerryWhite Chemmart



Dispensary Corner

THE mayor of a small village in Calabria, Italy, could have the answer to staffing and service shortages currently plaguing health systems throughout the world.

It's so ingenious, yet so simple, it's a wonder no one has thought of it before.

In short, Antonio Torchia's scheme comprises a mayoral decree that no one is permitted to get sick or injured.

People living in Belcastro "are ...ordered to avoid contracting any illness that may require emergency medical assistance", the decree reportedly states.

Belcastro has a population of around 1,200, of whom half are aged over 65.

Meanwhile, the nearest A&E is over 45km away via a road with a 30km/h speed limit - and more of a risk, according to Torchia, than any illness.

While there is an on-call doctor's surgery in the village, it's only open sporadically and offers no cover on weekends, holidays or after hours.

The decree further orders residents "not to engage in behaviours that may be harmful and to avoid domestic accidents", and "not to leave the house too often, travel or practise sports, and to instead rest for the majority of the time".

Torchia said the move was "obviously a humorous provocation", but noted it was having more of an effect than the urgent notices he had sent to regional authorities to highlight the shortcomings of the local healthcare system.

Heart and brain health link



HEART Research Australia is highlighting the link between heart health and brain health for its upcoming REDFEB heart awareness month, held in Feb each year.

Around four million Australians are affected by cardiovascular disease, but Heart Research Australia points out that few realise that keeping their heart healthy can also help protect their brain, memory and cognitive function, reducing the risk of conditions like dementia as they age.

"Heart health and brain health are intimately connected," said clinical neuropsychologist Dr Miranda Say.

"The brain relies on a steady supply of blood from the heart, and conditions like high blood pressure, high cholesterol can disrupt blood flow, increasing the risk of stroke and cognitive decline, including dementia," she explained.

This REDFEB, Heart Research Australia is urging all Australians to prioritise their heart health by adopting simple lifestyle changes that can have a profound impact on their future wellbeing.

The organisation is encouraging Australians to adopt its 4-M

Approach to heart and brain health:

Meals - high cholesterol levels can block blood vessels in the heart and brain, so a diet that avoids processed foods and favours fresh foods is recommended.

Movement - a combination of strength training and aerobic exercise lowers blood pressure, improves blood cholesterol and promotes the formation of new neural connections in the brain.

Measurement - regular monitoring of blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar is essential to catch changes early and take action.

Mental wellness - mindfulness moments can help support cognitive and cardiovascular health. Nicci Dent, CEO of Heart Research Australia, stressed the importance of taking proactive steps now.

"Prioritising heart health isn't just about preventing heart attacks - it's also about safeguarding your brain health and reducing your future risk of cognitive decline, including dementia," she said.

"The message is simple: what's good for your heart health is also good for your brain health." *KB*



Guild Update

AS 2025 kicks off, so does the National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association (NAPSA) Congress, held in Brisbane.

The event brings together hundreds of pharmacy students for a week-long event of education sessions, workshops, social gatherings, networking opportunities, a trade exhibition and more.

The Congress is a great opportunity for future pharmacists to get ready for 2025 and to become well-equipped for their future careers.

Key session highlights include:

Gerard Benedet, Executive Director of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, presents 'Decisions that Define Pharmacy'.

This session dives into recent issues including vape reforms, Doctor of Pharmacy pathway, and full scope evolution.

Chris Owen, a third-generation pharmacist and Queensland Branch President, presents a session on 'The Evolving Role of Community Pharmacy'.

A workshop titled 'Transitioning from University to the Workforce' will equip students to navigate challenges and seize opportunities early in their careers.

Ready to step into a prescriber's shoes?

'Building Pro Prescribers' provides insights into the steps to become a prescriber, support available, and practical tips to make this goal attainable.

The Guild is a platinum sponsor of the event, and proud to be supporting the future of pharmacy.

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- Retail managers
- Pharmacy managers
- Retail assistants (especially aspiring leaders)
- Inventory controllers
- Pharmacy owners

Program Highlights:

Day 1 Sunday 9 Feb

- Half-day conference sessions featuring keynote speakers Bri Williams and Brianne Shephard
- Welcome Function at Transit Bar Rooftop

Day 2 Monday 10 Feb

- Full-day of speed networking with sponsors
- Gala and Awards evening

Day 3 Tuesday 11 Feb

- Half-day conference sessions featuring keynote speaker Sam Wood

Inspirational speakers



Bri Williams
Behavioural Expert
and Founder & CEO
People Patterns



Brianne Shephard
Guild Pharmacy Assistant of the
Year 2019, State Manager
IPA NSW/ACT



Sam Wood
Personal Trainer
and Founder
28 By Sam Wood

[View full speaker line-up](#)

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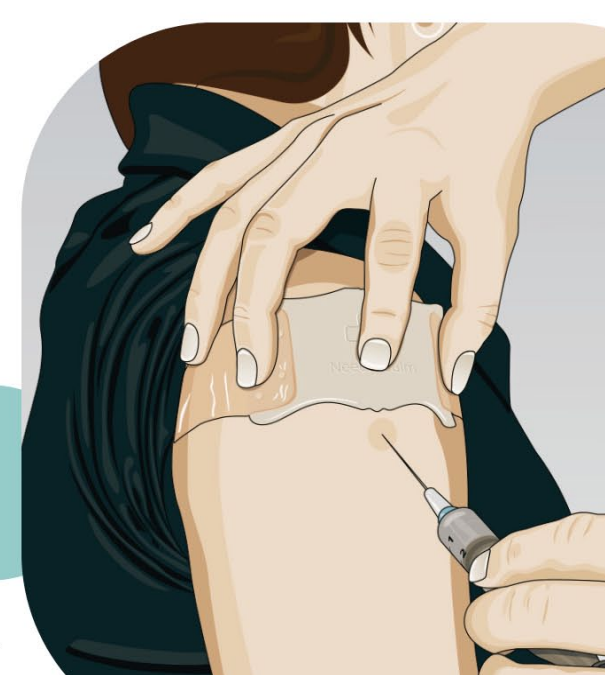
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References: 1. Wright, S., Heathcote, K., Wright, G., Yelland, M., & Ng, S.-K. (2009). Fear of needles: Nature and prevalence in general practice. *Australian Family Physician*, 38(3), 159-162. 2. Australian Government Department of Health. Administration of vaccines. In *Australian immunisation handbook*. Retrieved January 11, 2025, from <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/contents/vaccination-procedures/administration-of-vaccines>