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Pharmacy 777 Pilbara recognised

FINALISTS in the 2025 National Rural and Remote Health Awards have been announced, with Pharmacy 777 WA in the running for Rural/Remote Health Employer of the Year, and Pharmacy 777 in the Pilbara region for Outstanding Contribution to Rural/Remote Health Access.

Pharmacy 777 Chairman David Speak and MD Kim Brotherson congratulated the Pilbara team on their dual nominations.

"To be named as finalists in two award categories is a testament to the remarkable work the entire Pilbara team undertake in one of Australia's most remote and challenging regions," they said.

"For over 20 years, Pharmacy 777 has played an integral healthcare role in the Pilbara, and the team's success is a story of resilience, innovation, and deep



community commitment."

Lee Ross, co-owner of Pharmacy 777 Port Hedland, pointed to the expanding role of pharmacists, which is particularly vital in remote communities like those in Pilbara.

"The announcement coincides with our very first pharmacists commencing their training in this space, and we're excited about what this means for the future of rural healthcare," he said.

Winners will be announced at the awards ceremony on Wed 05 Nov.

Today's issue of PD

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

- Dispense Assist
- Direct Chemist Outlet

Time to take charge

PHARMACY owners can take charge of their future with the backing of Direct Chemist Outlet, one of Australia's fastest growing brands.

Learn more on **page five**.

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Dispensary help

DISPENSE Assist is a low-cost staffing solution with dispensary technicians available 24/7, at rates from as low as \$8.94 per hour, for services that include compounding, DAAs and any other required tasks - see **p4**.

Ahpra updates telehealth guidance

THE Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) has updated guidance for telehealth and virtual care to ensure patients receive high-quality care.

The changes reflect concerns around unethical practice and emerging business models focused more on profit than patient safety, with such practices in the medicinal cannabis space increasingly coming under fire (**PD** 09 Jul).

The agency called out poor practices, such as relying on SMS, email or online questionnaires to assess a patient's needs, rather than a face-to-face consultation; not obtaining informed consent around the use of AI scribes; and not confirming a patient's identity.

"Telehealth has been great in making it easier for people to get the care they need.

"We just want to make sure that convenience doesn't come at the cost of safety or quality," Ahpra CEO Justin Untersteiner said.

See the updated guide **HERE**.

DCO opens first ACT store

DIRECT Chemist Outlet recently opened its first store in the ACT, marking the 135th shopfront for the brand that launched in 2006 in Werribee, Victoria.

New store owners Freddy Kusakwashe and Ian Tauman (pictured right and left respectively) welcomed hundreds of locals through the doors of the Macquarie pharmacy with a sausage sizzle and giveaways.

Children had a chance to enjoy the brand's 'Little Pharmacist Experience', donning mini white coats, creating their own dispensing labels, and even "prescribing" jellybeans to their parents, while learning how pharmacists look after community health.

"It was magical to see the kids step into our shoes for the day," Kusakwashe said.

"Moments like that show how pharmacy is more than just dispensing medicine, it is about inspiring the next generation to care for each other."

DCO's General Manager Rhianna Davis said the opening of the 135th store was a proud achievement.



"What makes this milestone even more special is seeing a once-struggling pharmacy transformed into a vibrant and successful Direct Chemist Outlet," Davis said.

"It is a true reflection of the opportunity and support we bring to pharmacy owners who want to take control of their businesses and see them flourish."

DCO is one of the fastest growing pharmacy banners (**PD** 21 Jul), and Tauman - who is also DCO's Director and founder - reflected that it was less than two years ago it celebrated its 100th store.

"We are well on track to reach our [big hairy audacious goal] of 300 stores, and every new pharmacy that joins us is another step forward," Tauman said. **KB**

Renewed call for free meningococcal vax

ADVOCATES marked World Meningitis Day on 05 Oct by calling for state and territory governments to make safe and effective meningococcal vaccines freely available to children and adolescents, including the costly meningococcal B vaccine, which parents currently have to pay for in some states.

Meningitis Centre Australia

CEO Karen Quick noted that there has been 1,901 cases of vaccine preventable meningitis in Australia so far this year.

"The cost on individuals, families and the Australian taxpayer is huge, and we call on all state and territory governments to make the full suite of vaccines freely available to all Australians, wherever they live," Quick said.

Telstra Health responds

LAST week *Pharmacy Daily* reported on the rapidly approaching end of the transitional arrangement for the use of Electronic National Residential Medication Charts (eNRMC), with systems that are non-conformant no longer able to be used for prescriptions after 21 Oct (**PD** 03 Oct).

Telstra Health's MedPoint was one of the non-conformant systems, and their response to **PD's** request for comment came after it went to press.

The response confirmed the timeline reported in the article, and added:

"We understand customers feel let down and we have sincerely apologised for the administrative burden and disruption this has caused.

"We are working closely with customers to assist over this period and have provided interim workflow recommendations, including suggestions on how to manage these changes with prescribers and pharmacists until MedPoint conformance is achieved.

"Telstra Health remains fully committed to providing compliant, high-quality, clinically safe medication management solutions for our customers."

Telstra Health confirmed its other products were not affected and that it will provide MedPoint customers with regular updates.

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Dispensary Corner

CALLING all toe-preneurs.

Antifungal brand Canesten is urging Australians to "put their best foot forward" with the launch of a hunt for Australia's Best Feet - and \$10,000 is up for grabs.

If you think you might have Australia's best feet, Canesten invites you to share your 'best feet selfie' for your chance to win the big prize.

The top 10 finalists will each score a Chemist Warehouse voucher, with one ultimate winner crowned Australia's Best Feet.

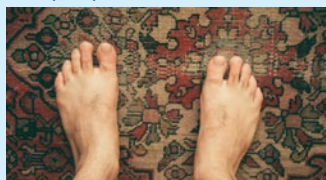
While taking a foot selfie doesn't seem like much of an ask, it certainly seems that looking at images of feet can be quite divisive.

The company's own research of over 1,000 people revealed that 63% of Australians would rather go to the dentist or speak in public than look at feet pics, while nearly a third (29%) would prefer to break a bone (!) than look at the photos.

On the other hand, 16% said they love looking at feet.

Australians 18 and over can enter by submitting their feet pics to the website [HERE](#) and rallying their mates, family and foot fans to vote.

"Remember, we're looking for the weird and wonderful - your pedicure doesn't need to be perfect to win it," the company clarified.



Look beyond pain management



INCIDENCE of conditions such as heart disease, arthritis, diabetes and cancer is higher in people with back pain than in those without, according to new research from Australia and Brazil, with authors urging health professionals to look beyond pain management when caring for these patients.

As a leading cause of disability worldwide, chronic back pain is a major burden on healthcare systems and economies.

Using data from the 2019 National Health Survey in Brazil, which included nearly 90,000 people, the study found that a range of diseases were more prevalent in people with chronic back pain.

Cardiovascular disease, arthritis and depression were the top three most prevalent comorbidities in people with chronic back pain, with diabetes, cancer, and asthma and other lung diseases also more common in this group.

Patients with chronic back pain who also had comorbidities were more likely to report severe activity limitations, particularly those who had arthritis, depression and cardiovascular disease, the research found.

Overall, six in every 10 people with chronic back pain had one

or more comorbidities, the data showed.

Approximately one in five people in the survey reported chronic back pain, a finding similar to higher-income countries, and the authors said this indicated the research has global relevance.

Back pain is one of the most common reasons people visit their GP, and the study suggests a wider, more integrated approach to care could reduce suffering and ensure other chronic diseases are properly managed.

"While more research is needed to understand the link between chronic back pain and other non-communicable diseases, they often share underlying risk factors such as physical inactivity, obesity, stress and poor sleep," said study lead Assoc Prof Rafael Zambelli Pinto, a physiotherapy researcher at the University of Technology Sydney.

"The findings highlight the urgent need for doctors to look beyond pain management when treating patients with chronic back pain.

"It's not just about the spine - these patients are carrying a heavier overall health burden that affects their independence and quality of life."

Read the study [HERE](#). KB

Resilience, passion driving success

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's (PSA) pharmacist-to-pharmacist advice line launched at the same time the COVID pandemic really kicked off, leaving the pharmacist on the end of the line, Amanda Fairjones, scrambling to cover the deluge of calls.

Now the NSW State Manager at the PSA, Fairjones recounted the experience with host Krysti Lee Patterson in the latest episode of the *Your Pharmacy Career Podcast*.

"I am actually really proud of the advice line and where it's grown to today - it offers a really great service to PSA members," Fairjones said.

With more than 20 years of experience across hospital and community pharmacy, as well as pharmacy ownership, Fairjones reflected on the defining moments that shaped her path and her leadership in pharmacy advocacy.

This includes her involvement in the PSA's training and support for pharmacists delivering the Opioid Treatment Program (OTP), including foundation training, long-acting buprenorphine education, and reducing stigma.

She encourages pharmacists and students to connect with the PSA, attend conferences, and make use of the advice line, not only for regulatory queries but also for career guidance.

"Amanda's story highlights the resilience, adaptability and passion that drive our profession forward," said Heidi Dariz, General Manager of Raven's Recruitment.

Listen to the podcast [HERE](#).



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IRENE VERGOS

Business Development Manager

0421 751 916

irene@directchemistoutlet.com.au

HANNAH JACKSON

Buying Manager

0403 547 473

hannah@directchemistoutlet.com.au

SARAH BROOKS

QLD State Manager

0422 070 730

sarah@directchemistoutlet.com.au

RHIANNA DAVIS

General Manager

0408 889 271

rhianna@directchemistoutlet.com.au