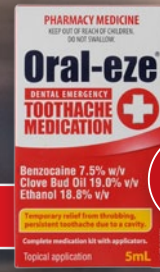


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# Prescribing endorsement consultation opens

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia has opened public consultation on the draft registration standards and guidelines for a proposed *Endorsement for scheduled medicines for pharmacists*.

This registration standard described how a pharmacist can qualify for endorsement for scheduled medicines, the scope of the endorsement and the expectations of practitioners with this type of endorsement, with the guidelines providing more detail on expectations.

The registration standard aimed to make pharmacist prescribing education nationally consistent, and involves building on pharmacists' existing skills to ensure appropriate training in physical examination, diagnosis, clinical decision-making, communication, record keeping and referral to other health professionals.

"It's important to remember that this proposal is not about allowing pharmacists to prescribe or not,"

Pharmacy Board of Australia Chair Dr Cameron Phillips said.

"It's about setting a nationally consistent standard to ensure that all pharmacists who are prescribing have the same level of education to do so safely."

In terms of which medicines eligible pharmacists could prescribe, the consultation paper asked stakeholders to choose between two options - authorise pharmacists to prescribe all Schedule 2, 3 and 4 medicines or authorise pharmacists to prescribe all Schedule 2, 3, 4 and 8 medicines.

The board is supporting the second option, which would allow pharmacists to prescribe Schedule 8 medicines - if authorised in their state or territory.

The controversy around Schedule 8 prescribing was acknowledged, with the consultation papers stating: "Some stakeholders expressed concerns that there are risks to the public, particularly in some practice settings if pharmacists



prescribed Schedule 8 medicines whereas others expressed support in circumstances including hospital discharge, emergency care and continuity of access to medicines in palliative care and opioid substitution treatment."

The draft guidelines also touched upon concerns around conflict of interest in prescribing and dispensing, suggesting a model where one pharmacist prescribes, with a second providing independent clinical oversight.

However, it acknowledged this is not always possible, and recommended documenting reasons behind prescribing decisions.

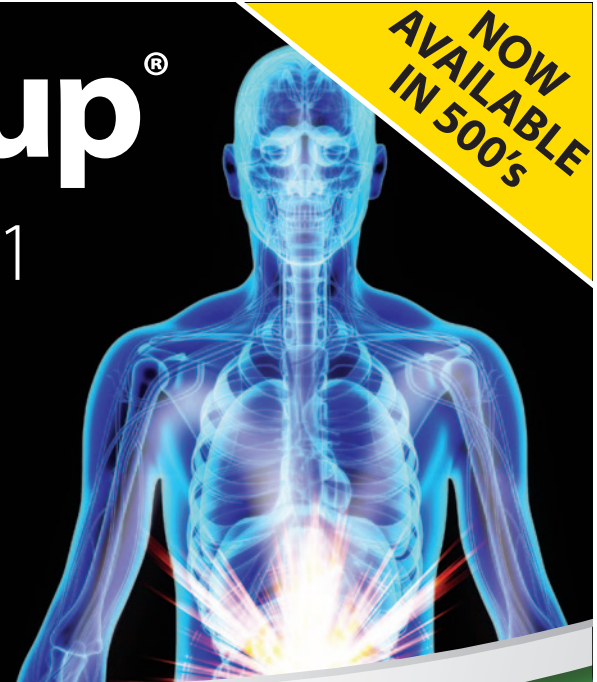
The consultation is open until 15 Jun - the consultation pack is [HERE](#).



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### Recreational use of ketamine rises

**WASTEWATER** analysis led by researchers at Adelaide University has found ketamine consumption rose across Australia from Dec 2020 to Apr 2025.

"We found that ketamine mass loads increased across Australia from 2022 to 2025, particularly in sites with higher socioeconomic status," said Prof Cobus Gerber from Adelaide University's School of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences.

"While our initial findings were largely consistent with expected prescribed use of ketamine, patterns started emerging of substantially elevated excretion on weekends, suggesting an increase in recreational, or non-medical use of the substance."

Excreted loads fluctuated from a low of about 1.6 mg/day/1,000 people in 2022 to 5.8 mg/day/1,000 people by the end of 2025.

Long-term health effects of ketamine include cognitive impairment and cardiovascular effects, while deaths due to overdose have increased internationally.

Professor Gerber said the study provided important insight into where resources and harm reduction messaging may be most needed.

The researchers recommended further research into behavioural drivers of drug use, including the context in which substances are used, combinations with other drugs, and the origin of non-medical ketamine circulating in the community - the paper is [HERE](#).

### Call for embedded rural pharmacist pilot

**AS THE** Federal Government enters final negotiations for the First Pharmacy Programs Agreement (1PPA), the Remote and Isolated Pharmacist Association Australia (RIPAA) is calling for a dedicated funding pilot to support resident clinical pharmacists in Australia's most isolated communities.

In many Modified Monash (MM) 5-7 communities, the main challenge is not a cap on services like Home Medicines Reviews (HMRs), but the financial sustainability of maintaining a permanent clinical presence, explained RIPAA president Fredrik Hellqvist.

"What our communities need is a funding model that also supports a resident clinical pharmacist - someone embedded in the town who understands the local patient history and provides the daily continuity of care that thin markets require," Hellqvist said.

RIPAA is calling for the allocation of 1PPA funds to a Thin Market

Resident Pilot which proposes:

- A fixed baseline of funding that secures the pharmacist's time for ongoing clinical outreach, aged care support, and complex medicine management

- Prioritising this funding for pharmacists whose AHPRA Principal Place of Practice is within eligible rural and remote thin market areas

- Integration with aged care to recruit and establish locally resident pharmacists to fulfil aged care on-site pharmacist (ACOP) roles in targeted small town facilities that currently lack a permanent clinical presence.

"We are calling for a pilot that recognises healthcare in the bush is most effective when it is a residency, not just a transaction," said Hellqvist.

"The 1PPA is the perfect vehicle to test a 'floor and ladder' model, acting as the structural bridge to ensure these programs are equitable in practice, not just in theory."



RIPAA said it has developed a detailed framework and preliminary costing for this model, "demonstrating its viability as a targeted, value-based investment".

### Same-day flu, pertussis vax safe in pregnancy

**PREGNANT** women can safely receive influenza and pertussis (whooping cough) vaccines on the same day, according to a large population-based study led by the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) and published in *JAMA Network Open*.

"Until now, there has been limited evidence on the safety of concomitant influenza and pertussis vaccination during pregnancy, particularly for pregnancy, birth and neonatal outcomes," explained lead author Nicole Sonneveld from the NCIRS.

The team examined pregnancy,

birth and neonatal outcomes among 14,000 women in NSW who received both vaccines at the same visit, compared with those who received the pertussis vaccine alone at a similar stage of pregnancy.

Outcomes investigated included preterm birth, babies being small for gestational age, and low birthweight.

The study found no increased risk in any of the assessed adverse outcomes when influenza and pertussis vaccines were given together during pregnancy, providing reassurance that concomitant vaccination is safe.

Read the study [HERE](#).

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1. Australian Government. Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. Australian Immunisation Handbook. Available at <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au>. Accessed March 2026. sanofi-aventis australia pty ltd trading as Sanofi. All rights reserved. ABN 31 008 558 807. Sydney, Australia. www.sanofi.com.au. MAT-AU-2600393 V1. Date of preparation: March 2026.

## Dispensary Corner

**MANY** people would agree that the best time to work out is in the morning, but night owls will be relieved to know that this is not necessarily the case.

Experts at the University of Edinburgh found that while early morning workouts are beneficial for morning people, the opposite is true for those who prefer to stay up late and sleep in the next day.

Published in the *Open Heart* journal, the study found that timing exercise to match a person's chronotype - the natural predisposition to morning or evening alertness - may lower heart disease risk.

The 12-week study tracked 150 participants between the ages of 40 and 60, who had at least one cardiovascular risk, such as high cholesterol or obesity, and led a sedentary lifestyle.

Participants completed a Morningness-Eveningness questionnaire to determine their chronotype, and were then randomly assigned a time to exercise that either matched their chronotype or did not.

While both groups saw several improvements, the researchers found that matching people's workout times with their chronotype resulted in more significant improvements in blood pressure, heart rate variability, aerobic capacity, metabolic markers and sleep quality, compared to mismatched exercise.

It is welcome news for those of us who are looking for another excuse to hit that snooze button.

## MTick: Behind the menopause 'one-stop shop'

**EXCLUSIVE**

**UK-BASED** organisation GenM founder Heather Jackson (pictured) is on a mission to support pharmacies helping women through menopause with its MTick certification and accreditation.

Earlier this year, GenM made its Australian debut through its partnership with TerryWhite, when the pharmacy business launched its focus on women's health (*PD* 16 Feb), and intends to engage with other retailers across the country.

For Australian brands, retailers and shoppers unfamiliar with the scheme, products displaying the symbol must undergo rigorous testing and criteria assessment verified via clinical user trials and expert validation, to prove that their products can help support one or more of the many recognised signs of menopause.

Jackson told *Pharmacy Daily* she was inspired to start the enterprise when she went through perimenopause and struggled to find the products she needed to support the symptoms she was experiencing.

"I was shopping for products that would help me have a better lived experience, from climate-controlled bedding to foundation that wouldn't run down my face to the supplements that I might need for my night sweats or my anxiety or my thinning hair," Jackson said.

After commissioning research on the experiences of women undergoing perimenopause and menopause, she said it became clear that many felt overlooked and let down by brands they had been loyal to throughout their lives.

What they wanted, Jackson said, was 'a one-stop shop for menopause', giving rise to the idea

for a clearly identifiable symbol certifying menopause-friendly products that lived up to their claims - hence GenM and its MTick certification scheme.

"Since 2019 when it started, GenM has united over 100 of the most recognised and powerful brands and retailers to partner with GenM and commit to making menopause more visible," Jackson said.

In Australia, this includes products from 11 brands - Promensil, Centrum, Femfresh, Mitchum, Boost Lab, BioGaia, Dulcolax, MY Pause, Happy Healthy You, NuAllume, and Hey Sister.

While seen by many as a positive in terms of breaking down stigma and taboo, the increased conversation around menopause over the last few years has also piqued the interest of brands looking to exploit this potentially lucrative but vulnerable market.

This has led to some fairly dubious tactics, dubbed 'menowashing', where a standard product is branded with the word 'meno', and marketed for menopause symptoms without solid scientific evidence.

Examples include personal care products, supplements, and famously, chocolate.

Holland & Barrett found itself under scrutiny from the UK advertising standards authority in 2024 around claims one of its chocolate bars helped soothe some symptoms of menopause.

While acknowledging it as an issue, Jackson declined to be drawn on some of the more egregious examples of menowashing, although she did highlight concerns about supplements.

"I was a naive consumer, and I have to say, I thought that all supplements that sat on a shelf did what they said on the label," she



told *PD*.

"Obviously I've done my research now, and not all supplements are equal - when you turn the bottle around, you realise they haven't got enough of a given ingredient to actually do what they say."

Jackson explained that MTick certification for supplements specifies minimum inclusion levels of key nutrients, and GenM conducts post-manufacturing tests to ensure label claim compliance.

"What's really exciting is that many of those products that had initially failed went back to the scientists, back into production, and had more ingredients put in there for all the right reasons," Jackson enthused.

"We do believe that over the next 18 months, the MTick will be seen as the symbol of symbols and certification of certifications - that we really are challenging on all levels and actually doing what women need.

"Navigating the trusted menopause market is made easier with the MTick, delivering shoppers the symbol they need to make informed shopping choices and help them to live their best menopause - as I wanted to do," Jackson concluded. *KB*



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