

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus a full page from Alcon's Poly Visc.

Ingrid Stitt new Vic health minister

A MINISTERIAL reshuffle yesterday has seen Ingrid Stitt appointed as the new Minister for Health, Mental Health, and Ambulance Services in Victoria.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia and Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) have welcomed the appointment, and stated they look forward to working with Stitt to strengthen access to timely, high-quality healthcare for Victorian patients and communities.

PSA Victorian president Atinuke Abraham noted Minister Stitt's previous success in delivering major reforms in mental health services, and saw her appointment as "a significant opportunity to further integrate pharmacists across the health system, particularly as we see an expanding scope of practice".

"The Community Pharmacist Program has already demonstrated what can be achieved when government and community pharmacy work together with a shared focus on patients," Guild Victoria Branch president George Tambassis added.

Abraham and Tambassis thanked the former minister Harriet Shing for her support.

Pharmacy bolsters harm reduction

VICTORIAN pharmacist Krishna Nathwani has been named the inaugural harm reduction champion by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), and was introduced to delegates at PSA26 on Fri.

The aim of the position is to elevate pharmacist leadership in harm reduction and strengthen the profession's role in improving access to care, reducing stigma, and supporting safer health outcomes for the community.

"Harm reduction saves lives and strengthens the health and wellbeing of our communities, with pharmacists having long played a role in this space," Nathwani said as she addressed the audience.

"There's such a big deal for wraparound care, collaborative care, and consistent, equitable care that's destigmatising but also dignifying," she continued.

"We've been talking about how much pharmacists still have to do, how much we can expand our scope, and there's a real big opportunity there.

"I'm really excited to do that together with all of our pharmacists to hear your wins, your success stories, and your barriers as well, but I'm really excited for what the next 12 months will bring."

Time to switch

ALCON Poly Visc lubricating eye ointment twin pack has been discontinued.

Learn more about switching your customers to the PBS-listed single pack on [page four](#).

Don't suffer the pain of toothache.

Available from Symbion, Sigma, API & CH2

Always read the label and follow the directions for use.



MEANWHILE, the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC) at UNSW has released its latest report showing that drug-induced deaths and hospitalisations in Australia have risen, with more than 2,000 deaths in 2024 - about 5.5 deaths per day.

Nearly 57,000 drug-related hospitalisations were also recorded, marking a 10.5% increase compared to the previous year.

The trend was driven by increased harms from amphetamine-type stimulants and cocaine, although opioids remained the leading drug class identified in overdose deaths, followed by benzodiazepines.

Associate Professor Amy Peacock, NDARC deputy director and Drug Trends Program lead, said the emerging patterns are a major public health concern, and the declines recorded in recent years have "well and truly stalled".

"Our findings suggest methamphetamine-related harms are increasing again, alongside rising harms associated with cocaine use," Assoc Prof Peacock said.

"The sooner we respond to these changing patterns of drug-related harm, the greater our opportunity to prevent avoidable deaths and hospitalisations."

Read the report [HERE](#). KB

Men in Mind now for pharmacists

PHARMACISTS and other primary healthcare workers can now access the Movember Men in Mind program, helping them to better engage, support and care for male patients.

The Federal Government has invested \$11.3 million to expand the program, which until now was only available to mental health practitioners.

Delivered in partnership with Primary Health Networks, the program will equip pharmacists with practical, evidence-based strategies to build trust, strengthen communication, and support men to engage earlier and more regularly with healthcare.

The course builds on pharmacists' existing skillsets with practical tools to recognise when men may be minimising symptoms, delaying disclosure or disengaging from follow-up, including when they may be experiencing mental health difficulties.

"Men in Mind for Primary Care recognises the important role community pharmacy can play in men's health," Guild national president Trent Twomey said.

"The course gives pharmacists practical tools to strengthen every conversation with men, support earlier engagement and help connect them with appropriate care."

The course is accredited by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA).



Light.

Grow Services.

Deliver Care with Confidence.

Chat to us at Pharmacy Forum!



Australia's antibiotic use is ~30% above OECD average

Patients are feeling it. Probiotics assist

[Watch Now](#) 3 min



TGA sues over med cannabis ads

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has commenced proceedings in the Federal Court of Australia against Better Leaf, Better Life and their sole director Mr Jack Weisberg for the alleged unlawful advertising of medicinal cannabis.

This follows the repeated failure on the part of the entities to pay multiple infringement notices for alleged unlawful advertisements in contravention of the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989*.

The TGA has alleged that the companies unlawfully advertised medicinal cannabis on their website, social media pages, and physical pamphlets at their dispensary business.

Ads promoted the use of medicinal cannabis for the treatment of serious diseases, conditions and disorders, including chronic pain, chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting, refractory paediatric epilepsy, fibromyalgia, autism spectrum disorder, and sleep conditions.

Known as restricted or prohibited representations, these cannot be included in ads for therapeutic goods unless approved by the TGA.

The ads are also alleged to have implied that medicinal cannabis has been approved or recommended on behalf of the TGA, and included endorsements from current or former health practitioners.

Flip the script on loneliness

HEALTH professionals are encouraging Australians to prioritise social connection this Loneliness Awareness Week (03-09 Aug), highlighting that meaningful relationships are essential for both physical and mental health.

This year's theme, 'Make Room for Connection', celebrates the everyday ways people can create opportunities for belonging, whether that is inviting a neighbour over for a cup of tea, joining a community group or simply making time for a conversation.

It comes as governments around the world are actively considering how health systems can strengthen connection, belonging and community participation as essential components of health.

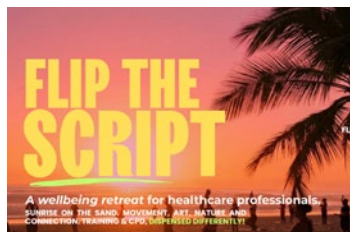
Awareness-raising collaboration Ending Loneliness Together revealed in its *2026 State of the Nation Report* worsening statistics in Australia, with one in two adults now suffering from loneliness and/or social isolation at any given time, up from one in three in 2023.

There is growing evidence that disconnection increases the risk of heart attack, stroke, and premature death by almost 30%, and depression and dementia by almost 50%.

MEANWHILE, as healthcare professionals support others through loneliness, mental ill-health and social isolation, they are increasingly experiencing these challenges themselves.

Rising rates of burnout, emotional exhaustion and workforce attrition have highlighted the urgent need to care for those who care for others.

Pharmacist Jenny Kirschner, founder of Pharmacy Addressing



Loneliness and Social-isolation (PALS), and Dr Kuljit Singh, national chair of the RACGP Social Prescribing Special Interest Group, have invited the profession to 'Flip the Script', placing connection, community and wellbeing at the heart of healthcare.

'Flip the Script: A wellbeing retreat for healthcare professionals' will bring together more than 100 frontline healthcare professionals at the Gold Coast on 10 Oct 2026, World Mental Health Day.

"This isn't simply another wellbeing event - we are flipping the script on healthcare itself," Kirschner explained.

"For too long we have expected healthcare professionals to continue caring for everyone else while neglecting their own wellbeing," she continued.

"We want healthcare professionals to experience what connection feels like - to rediscover the power of connection, community, belonging and purpose - so they can confidently prescribe those experiences forward to the people they care for."

The organisers hope the retreat will become a scalable model for healthcare workforce wellbeing, while generating evidence to support future implementation, research and policy.

Learn more [HERE](#). KB

Pharmacy Connect winners named

THE winners of a full registration for Pharmacy Connect 2026 and two nights' accommodation at Hyatt Regency Sydney have been announced, with Andrew B and Lisa E, both from NSW, recipients of the prizes valued at up to \$1,500.

More on the conference [HERE](#).

Register now for NMS 2026

THE National Medicines Symposium (NMS) 2026 on 11 Nov will explore the topic of 'Medicines stewardship: safer use starts with all of us'.

The free virtual event will bring together clinicians, researchers, policymakers and individuals with lived experience to share strategies, interventions and tools to improve the safe and quality use of medicines throughout Australia.

Topics will include antimicrobial stewardship, penicillin allergy delabelling, the role of the multidisciplinary team in promoting medicines stewardship, challenges for priority populations, and digital health tools and technology.

Pharmacy leaders Adjunct Professor Manya Angley and Associate Professor Juanita Breen are among the speakers.

The full program will be released soon.

Register for NMS 2026 [HERE](#).

Check out the latest in

Beauty & Wellness

Every Thursday in *Pharmacy Daily*





Dispensary Corner

ALREADY used to freshen breath, neutralise food acids after eating, deliver nicotine and create enormous bubbles, scientists have now developed a chewing gum that fights head and neck cancer.

The research team from the University of Pennsylvania built on earlier research involving chewing gum made from lablab beans (bean gum), which contains FRIL, a naturally occurring antiviral protein.

Chewing this gum reduced salivary levels of human papilloma virus (HPV) - which is linked with oropharyngeal cancer - by 93%.

The researchers then engineered the bean gum to contain protegrin, an antimicrobial peptide capable of killing *Porphyromonas gingivalis* (Pg) and *Fusobacterium nucleatum* (Fn), bacteria implicated in reduced survival rates in recurrent or metastatic oral cancer.

They found a single dose of the gum brought levels of Pg and Fn down to almost zero.

Notably, it did not appear to harm the beneficial bacteria that normally live in the mouth, whereas radiation therapy can reduce helpful bacteria while encouraging the growth of potentially harmful candida yeast.

The team wrote in *Scientific Reports* that the gum could eventually serve as an additional therapy alongside current cancer treatments or as a preventive measure against infection and transmission.

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Suppliers wanting to promote products in this feature should email advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au

Switch to Poly Visc® Lubricating Eye Ointment single pack

As of 1 August 2026, the Poly Visc® twin pack is discontinued. Any remaining stock can continue to be sold over the counter to patients until it runs out.

To support patients and practitioners currently using this product, a transition to the Poly Visc® Lubricating Eye Ointment single pack is recommended.

The single pack is PBS-listed, supplied in a 3.5 g tube, and retains the same preservative-free lubricating eye ointment formulation for the management of dry eye symptoms, particularly for night-time use.

RRP: \$10.99

Website: [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

Reference: Poly Visc® Lubricating Eye Ointment Instructions For Use.

©2026 Alcon Laboratories Pty Ltd. AUS: 1800 224 153; Auckland NZ: 0800 101 106. ANZ-DRT-2600001



Mag-Sup powder - a better way to absorb magnesium

Mag-Sup powder is a high absorption magnesium supplement for use in magnesium deficiencies. It contains magnesium aspartate which has increased bioavailability compared to other forms of magnesium. Magnesium aspartate has better oral absorption than magnesium citrate, magnesium glycinate, magnesium chloride and magnesium oxide.

- High dose, once a day
- Rapidly absorbed
- Natural forest berry flavour
- Up to 300mg elemental magnesium per day
- Contains no artificial preservatives, colours or flavours

Available in 200g packs equivalent to 40 doses.

RRP: \$21.57

Supplier: Available from Symbion, Sigma, API & CH2. Contact your Clear Sales representative on 1800 640 043 for special deals.

Website: [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.



TIME TO SWITCH



Switch to
Poly Visc® Single pack
Lubricating Eye Ointment

DRY EYE RELIEF DURING NIGHTTIME