

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

VAD legal in NT

VOLUNTARY assisted dying (VAD) is now legal across Australia after the Northern Territory passed the *Rights of the Terminally Ill* legislation in a conscience vote yesterday.

The passage of the bill brings the NT in line with the rest of the country, and marks the second time VAD has been legalised in the Territory, after the Federal Parliament moved to disallow the 1995 law.

Go Gentle Australia CEO Dr Linda Swan said it was "an historic moment for the NT and for the country, and the culmination of a decades-long fight for democratic choice".

The charity voiced concern that the new law will be difficult for many Territorians to access due to a 12-month prognosis requirement and a 'gag clause' that prevents doctors from initiating discussions about VAD.

"The work to make sure the law operates fairly and compassionately now lies ahead," founding director Andrew Denton said.

Qld ensures protection of pharmacies

THE Queensland Government has passed legislation overnight that prevents major supermarkets from offering pharmacy services online.

Amendments to the *Pharmacy Business Ownership Act 2024* mean that the protections already applying to community pharmacies in the physical environment have now been extended to the digital world.

"We applaud the Queensland Government for closing these loopholes that could have seen big chain supermarkets trading as online pharmacies," Chris Owen, president of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's Queensland

Freeze medicine prices

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia is now urging the Federal Government to keep medicine affordable by freezing the general co-pay price until 2030, matching the existing freeze for concession card holders.

Prescription prices are currently at their lowest level in 20 years after the general co-pay price was reduced from \$31.50 to \$25 on 01 Jan (**PD** 05 Jan).

Unless the government steps in now, however, that price is set to rise with indexation from 01 Jan 2027, the Guild warned.

Australians have saved more than \$1.41 billion on medicines since the cost of PBS prescriptions were cut in 2023 (**PD** 27 Oct 2022), including \$130 million in savings this year alone.

If these cuts had not been implemented, the cost of a PBS script would now be around \$50.

Locking in 2026 prices for 2027 will help ease inflation, with any secondary demand effects being too negligible to offset the price relief effects, the industry body also argued.

"While the cost of many of life's essentials, such as fuel and groceries continue to rise, Australians have enjoyed peace of mind knowing the price of their PBS medicines is frozen," the Guild's

branch, said.

"Many are aware of the failed overseas model of pharmacy where the community aspect of pharmacy is thrown out the door and the only beneficiaries are the supermarket giants.

"The amendments also protect community pharmacies, many of them small and family-owned businesses, from arrangements that could give major supermarket chains an unfair competitive advantage," Owen added.

The Guild Queensland branch said the changes were a direct response to concerns raised with the state government by communities across Queensland.



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national president Professor Trent Twomey (**pictured**) said.

"Putting billions of dollars collectively back into Australians' pockets shows exactly the life-changing benefits cheaper medicines deliver.

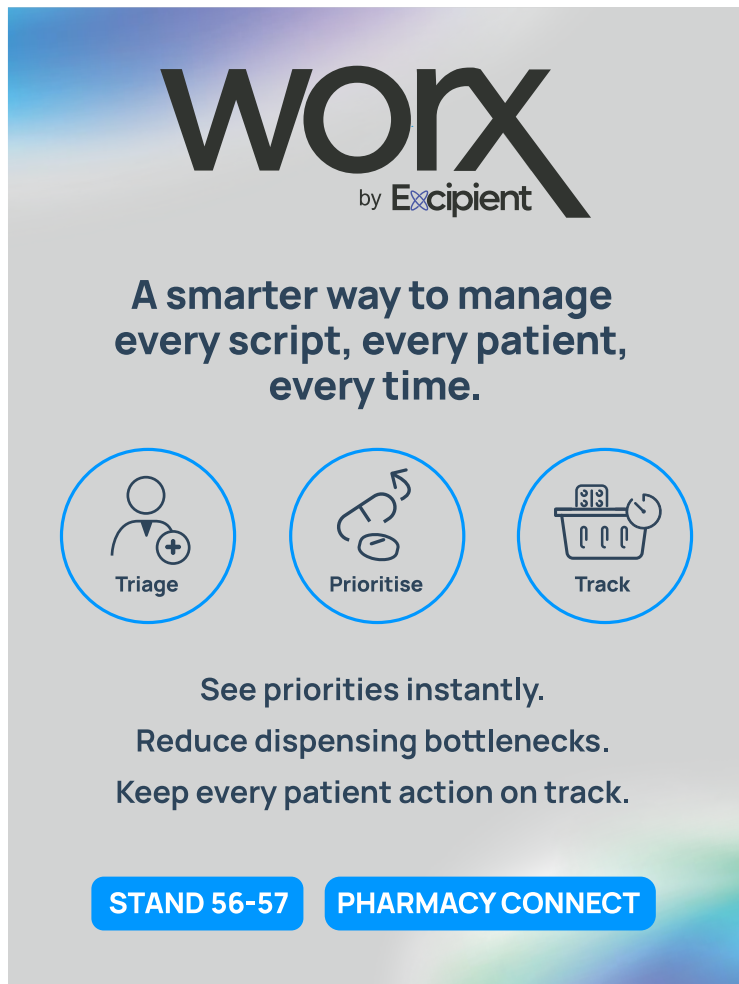
"Everyday community pharmacists see the tough choices people make when household budgets are stretched - going without essential medicine should never be one of them," Twomey added. *JM*

Rethinking GLP-1

THE rise of GLP-1 medicines such as Ozempic and Mounjaro is shining a light on the under-recognised overlap between obesity and eating disorders, according to researchers from Adelaide University.

Preliminary evidence has suggested that the appetite-suppressing effects of these medications could potentially pose risks for some people with eating disorders - many of whom are not underweight and therefore go undiagnosed.

"The priority now is identifying which patients are most likely to benefit, which patients are at greatest risk of harm, and ensuring appropriate screening, monitoring and multidisciplinary care become part of routine prescribing," clinical psychologist Professor Sharp said.



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STAND 56-57 **PHARMACY CONNECT**



Dispensary Corner

REGULARLY watching - or should we say consuming - viral eating videos could be skewing viewers' relationship with food and the way they think about their bodies.

For some reason, millions of people around the world enjoy tuning into 'mukbang' content, where social media stars film themselves eating shocking amounts of food.

Tzuyang, for example, who is a Korean mukbang creator, has around 13.4 million subscribers on her YouTube channel.

Rather than merely being a harmless (and rather bizarre) form of entertainment, a new Flinders University study of 446 young adults from Australia and China found that people who often watched mukbang videos were more likely to experience body image concerns, strong food cravings and symptoms linked to disordered eating.

"Many eating videos feature people consuming large amounts of food while maintaining a thin appearance," Phoebe Wu from Flinders University's College of Health and Enablement said.

"Our findings suggest that frequent exposure to this type of content may be linked to concerns about appearance, food cravings and unhealthy eating behaviours."



PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

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