

Monday 9th Feb 2026

## Today's issue of PD

**Pharmacy Daily** today features two pages of the latest industry news,

## Immunisation handbook updates

THE Department of Health has announced updates to the Australian Immunisation Handbook, including changes to mpox, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and herpes zoster guidelines.

Groups recommended for primary vaccination against mpox have been expanded to include humanitarian workers and travellers to a clade I mpox region who might undertake sexual risk activities.

There is also an update to the post-exposure prophylaxis vax guidelines to recommend coverage for both high and medium risk contacts, and improved clarity on booster dose guidance following first- and second-generation vaccines.

There is added guidance for vaccination of individuals with a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome in both the RSV and zoster chapters, as well as variation to product information regarding recommended needle gauge for reconstitution of Shingrix.

Other pages updated during Jan include meningococcal disease and hepatitis A, while MMR vaccine advice now includes pain relief advice.

Learn more [HERE](#).

## Free flu shots, expanded vax scope in Qld

THE Queensland Government is providing an expanded free influenza vaccination program, enabling people aged six months and over to access free flu shots ahead of the 2026 peak flu season.

Commencing 01 Mar 2026, the program will also include a needle-free nasal spray vaccine for eligible children aged two to five years.

Minister for Health and Ambulance Services Tim Nicholls noted this was the first time the needle-free flu vaccine will be available in Australia.

"This nasal spray vaccination is expected to improve vaccine uptake amongst young kids by removing potential distress about needle vaccinations," Nicholls said.

President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland Branch Chris Owen welcomed the enhanced flu initiative.

"This expanded program will see community pharmacists play a bigger role in vaccinating Queenslanders," Owen said.

"More opportunities to get the free flu vaccine will not only benefit those who receive it directly, it also helps prevent the spread to loved ones who may be more susceptible to having serious complications from influenza exposure," he added.

The Queensland Government also announced it will amend legislation to enable trained health practitioners, including pharmacists, to vaccinate more age groups in more locations against more vaccine-preventable diseases across the state.

The Pharmaceutical Society

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of Australia (PSA) has strongly endorsed the decision, with Queensland PSA president Hannah Knowles stating that the scope of practice reforms improve access, prevention and system resilience.

"When pharmacists are authorised to vaccinate more age groups and in more settings, it removes unnecessary barriers to care and allows the health system to respond where demand actually exists, in the community," Knowles said.

"Pharmacist immunisers safely administer millions of vaccine doses each year to protect Australians against vaccine-preventable diseases.

"But up until now, pharmacists and patients have had to navigate complex regulations regarding legal authority to vaccinate, which haven't lined up with clinical recommendations," she said, pointing out that this has become a barrier to vaccination.

"This change will mean pharmacist immunisers can administer vaccines to all patients where clinically appropriate and

within their individual level of competency."

PSA National President Professor Mark Naunton called on other jurisdictions to follow the Sunshine State's lead.

"I congratulate the Queensland Government for this common-sense announcement which will benefit patients," Prof Naunton said.

"I urge state and territory government around Australia to join Queensland and South Australia in simplifying vaccination regulation so that it works for patients, rather than work against them." KB

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## Dispensary Corner

THE prospect of going on an overseas holiday just got even better, with jet lag potentially to become a thing of the past.

Scientists from Kanazawa University in Japan have developed Mic-628, a drug that can 'reset' your body clock.

It works by inducing a gene called Per1, which plays an important role in maintaining a person's circadian rhythm.

In tests conducted on mice, a single oral dose of Mic-628 shortened the internal clock's readjustment period from seven days to just four.

According to the researchers, the drug could be used to manage jet lag or shift work, offering a more effective alternative than light therapy or taking melatonin.

The findings follow a recent study published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, which found that jet lag is more severe when travelling eastwards.

"West-to-east transmeridian flights are more disruptive than east-to-west ones due to challenges in advancing the human circadian clock," the developers of Mic-628 wrote.

The team said they plan to further investigate the safety and effectiveness of their treatment in additional animal and human studies.



## APC opens consultation



THE Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) has opened consultation on the revised Accreditation Standards for Pharmacy Programs (2020), and is seeking feedback from health professionals, consumers, educators and other stakeholders.

The standards, which are reviewed every five years, play a critical role in ensuring pharmacy programs produce graduates and interns who are fully prepared with the skills and knowledge required for safe and effective practice upon registration.

They form the foundation of APC's accreditation processes for pharmacy education programs that lead to registration with the Pharmacy Board of Australia, and will align with the forthcoming Pharmacist Capability Framework that APC is developing with the Pharmacy Board of Australia (**PD 30 Oct 2025**).

APC chief standards officer, Kate Spencer, stated that these standards support innovation and are fundamental to ensuring that graduates and interns enter the profession equipped for safe, confident and effective practice.

"Pharmacy education is rapidly evolving in response to changes in healthcare delivery, expanded professional scope, and workforce

needs," Spencer said.

"New degree structures are emerging, with different program types that lead either to completion of an internship or directly to eligibility for general registration.

"The revised accreditation standards will continue to support innovation in pharmacy education design and delivery," she added.

APC CEO, Bronwyn Clark, noted that the updated standards are being developed with extensive stakeholder consultation to ensure they remain current, competency-focused and responsive to the profession's needs.

"They will facilitate innovation by education providers and support the delivery of high-quality, integrated programs that prepare graduates to meet the current and future needs of patients, communities, and the profession," Clark said.

"Public consultation is central to the way we work at APC, and I strongly encourage our stakeholders to participate.

"Your insights help us shape high-quality, future-focused standards that strengthen pharmacy education and support the profession well into the future," she concluded.

Learn more [HERE](#).

## New Priceline charity partners

PRICELINE Pharmacy's Sisterhood Foundation has onboarded two new charity partners to its portfolio.

Australian organisations Mura Kosker Sorority and the Darwin Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Women's Shelters Indigenous Corporation (DAIWS) have been welcomed to the Sisterhood Foundation, as it aims to increase its focus on health issues linked to social determinants, such as family violence and homelessness.

Funding for the two charities will focus on capability-building initiatives such as governance and systems strengthening, culturally grounded healing programs, and leadership development.

"The addition of Mura Kosker Sorority and DAIWS marks an important moment in the Foundation's evolution and reflects our commitment to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for all women and girls in Australia," Sisterhood Foundation chair Emily Amos said.

"These partnerships recognise the importance of supporting organisations where solutions are led by communities, rooted in culture and shaped by lived experience," she added.

"It is a first step towards helping address inequity and supporting better health outcomes for First Nations women and girls, particularly in regional and remote Australia," Amos said.

The Sisterhood Foundation has so far raised \$13.7 million.

