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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news, plus a full page from MediChoice OSTEOPATHS.

Osteo control

NEW MediChoice OSTEOPATHS from Nova Pharmaceuticals provides up to eight hours of relief from osteoarthritis pain.

The pharmacist-only medicine contains 665mg of paracetamol and comes in a pack of 96 - more on [page five](#).

Man charged over CWH incident

TASMANIAN police have charged a 29-year-old Hobart man with attempted armed robbery, after he allegedly threatened staff at Chemist Warehouse North Hobart with a large knife on Mon afternoon.

The man allegedly demanded money from staff, before fleeing after a customer reportedly intervened by hitting him on the head with a heavy object.

Tasmania Police stated nothing was stolen and no physical injuries were reported, and the man has been bailed to appear in Hobart Magistrates Court on 22 Jun.



Call to back medicine safety

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) is urging the Federal Government to support the delivery of vital medicine safety programs to patients, pointing out that the current situation is increasingly jeopardising the health of vulnerable Australians.

In its 2026-27 Federal Budget Submission, the PSA highlighted that those at the highest risk of medicine-related harm - people in residential care, older Australians, and people living with chronic and complex conditions - need regular and urgent management of their medicines to stay well and reduce preventable emergency hospitalisations.

The PSA is seeking support for Home Medicines Reviews (HMRs), Residential Medication Management Reviews (RMMRS) and Quality Use of Medicines (QUM), and the Aged Care On-Site Pharmacists (ACOP) program.

"Without urgent investment, these medicine safety programs are becoming unsustainable, leaving more patients at risk of emergency hospitalisation from unresolved problems with their medicines," said PSA national president Professor Mark Naunton.

"The next budget is a critical opportunity to modernise long-neglected pharmacy programs and deliver stronger patient care to all Australians, particularly those most at risk of medicine-related harm," he continued.

"This is about restoring and securing better outcomes for Australians who rely on medicines for their health and wellbeing."

The PSA stated the reforms were "long overdue" and it stands ready to work with governments to implement these measures immediately through the First



PSA 2026-2027 FEDERAL BUDGET SUBMISSION

Pharmacy Programs Agreement across primary and aged care.

"Supporting these programs will increase productivity in the health system by reducing wait times, strengthening workforce sustainability, and improving the safe use of medicines for high-risk groups," Professor Naunton said.

The PSA has also proposed some complementary measures to lift health system performance in vaccination, primary care integration and multidisciplinary care.

These include changes to the National Immunisation Program Vaccinations in Pharmacy (NIPVIP) program rules, and funding to integrate pharmacists within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health services.

Read the submission [HERE](#).

Free flu vax for WA

ALL Western Australians will be eligible for free flu vaccines this year as part of the state government's 'Winter Strategy', announced yesterday.

From 01 May to 30 Jun, vaccines will be available to people aged 12 to 64 who are not otherwise eligible for free shots under the National Immunisation Program (NIP).

Children aged two to 11 years will be offered the Flumist intranasal live-attenuated flu vaccine from mid-Apr to 31 Jul.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has welcomed the announcement, noting that the inclusion of Flumist affords parents and children more choice.

"Pharmacists play a vital role in ensuring the community is protected through flu season and we welcome the government's 'Winter Strategy' for 2026," said Kristian Ray, PSA WA branch president.

"The expansion of access allowing pharmacists to immunise children from the age of two provides more West Australians the opportunity to be vaccinated against influenza."

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Leafio partners with Canadian supplier

MEDICINAL cannabis distributor Leafio has entered into an agreement to distribute Canadian company Organigram Global's Boxhot and Edison brands to Australian patients.

Organigram operates the world's largest indoor cannabis cultivation facility, with product development capabilities across dried flower, oils, and next-generation cannabis formats such as vapes and pastilles.

The company also has an established track record of supplying international cannabis markets with high-quality medicinal cannabis products and brings significant research and development expertise to the partnership.

The agreement aims to broaden Leafio's extensive product offering to the 4,000 pharmacies it supplies, as the sector continues to mature in 2026.

This distribution agreement for Organigram brands represents an important step in expanding Leafio's medicinal cannabis portfolio," said Leafio GM Nicole Le Maistre.

"Organigram's manufacturing capabilities and regulatory experience align strongly with our focus on compliance, reliability, and patient access.

"We look forward to working closely with Organigram, leveraging strong synergies for collaboration as the Australian market continues to mature."

APP2026 picks for pharmacy assistants

JESSICA Brown (pictured), 2025 winner of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia/Maxigesic Pharmacy Assistant of the Year Award, has shared her must-see sessions for pharmacy assistants at APP2026.

Featuring a mix of clinical learning, personal development, industry insight and high energy networking opportunities, Brown's picks highlight aspects of the program that make this year's program a standout for pharmacy assistants at every stage of their career.

First cab off the rank is the opening plenary on Thu morning. "If you want to understand where community pharmacy is heading and why it matters, you need to be in the room for this session", Brown said.

"[It] sets the tone for the entire conference, reflecting on how far the sector has come and the real challenges shaping what comes next," she explained.

Meanwhile, the panel session 'Strengthening community pharmacy's role in primary care' will get attendees up to speed on where community pharmacy is heading beyond the dispensary and into the heart of primary care.

Still on the topic of change, the session 'Rewriting the script - the evolved role of pharmacy' on Fri afternoon looks at how tech and AI are shaping the future of pharmacy.

One of Brown's top personal development picks lies in how to connect with others, especially those facing mental health challenges.

"Psychology thought leader Mitch Wallis introduces Real Conversations, a simple, practical

five-step framework that helps pharmacy professionals respond with empathy and confidence when someone opens up," Brown said.

Three of the clinical pharmacy sessions made it onto Brown's list, including 'Advancing cognitive health in pharmacy' which looks at dietary supplements that may help support brain function.

Another was 'The gut-metabolism connection', which unpacks the emerging science of the gut microbiome and its role in metabolic regulation, with 'The proactive pharmacist's guide to UV's impact on skin' rounding out the clinical picks.

Finally, leaning into the social aspects of APP2026, pharmacy assistants are invited to a networking lunch on Sat, where they will also get the chance to meet Brown.

"If you're a pharmacy assistant looking to connect, this is the place to be," she said.

"Meet like-minded peers, swap stories and pick up tips from those



shaping the profession."

Brown also pointed to the welcome reception as "the easiest way to dive into the trade exhibition - the floor is buzzing with new ideas, bold tech and genuinely interesting people".

Brown's list of top picks - and the conference itself - wraps up with the APP Street Fiesta, featuring "vibrant music, a DJ, a cover band and the headliner everyone's talking about - Peking Duk".

"It's the perfect way to unwind, dance, and add a little extra spice to your APP experience," Brown enthused. *KB*

2 weeks

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Psychotropics in aged care



AGED care medication experts writing in the *Australian Prescriber* have highlighted the difficulty in determining what constitutes a psychotropic medicine in the context of ensuring their safe and appropriate use in people with cognitive disability or impairment. “The term has various definitions and meanings and there is considerable debate about which medicines fall into this category,” they observed.

The situation is further muddled when antiemetics, medicines for Parkinson’s disease, and even nicotine are sometimes incorrectly included in an aged care facility’s psychotropic register.

For some, psychotropics are synonymous with the practice of ‘chemical restraint’, which is now an offence under the *Aged Care Act* that came into effect last year (**PD 07 Nov 2025**).

According to guidance from the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, the main psychotropic classes include antipsychotics, antidepressants and anxiolytic/hypnotics (e.g. benzodiazepines), with other classes such as anticonvulsants and opioids also included because they are

sometimes used off-label to take advantage of their sedating qualities.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) has defined a psychotropic as ‘any medicine or substance whose primary or significant effects are on the central nervous system’.

It further differentiates psychotropic medicines, which are primarily used to treat mental health disorders (antidepressants, antipsychotics, anxiolytics, hypnotics and mood stabilisers), from psychotropic substances, which have a high potential for misuse due to their effects on mood, consciousness, or both (cannabis, opioids and stimulants).

“In view of the ambiguity over what medicines to include, consistent Australian adoption of the WHO definition of ‘psychotropic’ may help rationalise psychotropic registers,” the authors suggested.

“Ultimately, ensuring psychotropics are used judiciously in vulnerable older people and those with disability is fundamental to delivering safer, rights-based and genuinely person-centred care.”

Read the article **HERE**. **KB**

Scope in focus

Professor Trent Twomey

EDUCATION is the cornerstone of expanding the services pharmacists can deliver in partnership with the broader healthcare team.

Across Australia, we’re seeing incredible progress - not just in policy, but in the practical steps that make change possible.

Our first prescribing pharmacists completed their Graduate Certificate of Advanced Practice and Prescribing at James Cook University (JCU).

Graduate Certificate programs are now available across most Australian states, reflecting a significant expansion in advanced practice education.

Leading universities offering these courses include the University of Adelaide, the University of Western Australia, the University of Newcastle, Monash University and the University of Technology Sydney.

JCU delivers the course in Qld and the NT, and collaborates with Curtin University and the University of Tasmania.

These support local initiatives to enable pharmacists to deliver more healthcare services, taking the pressure off GPs and ensuring patients have access to safe care.

There’s also growing investment in these pathways, with training subsidies and support programs in Qld, NT, Tas, WA and SA.

This means pharmacists everywhere, not just in metropolitan areas, can access the education they need.

For patients in rural and remote communities, expanded services delivered by pharmacists mean timely care without long travel or

wait times.

These changes aren’t just about professional growth - they’re about building a smarter, stronger health system for the future.

The opportunity is here, and the need is urgent - let’s seize it.

There is a shared recognition that education unlocks opportunity, and by investing in training, governments and universities are helping pharmacists practise to their full scope, safely, collaboratively, and with confidence.

Expanded scope means better access, better outcomes, and a stronger health system.

For years, we’ve advocated for pharmacists to use their skills to the fullest, and now, the pathways are here.

If you’ve ever wanted to take your career to the next level and make an even bigger impact on patient care, now is the time.

I’d like to thank these universities for having the foresight and confidence to invest in delivering these courses.

By doing so they are investing in the future of pharmacy and in the health of Australia.

These competencies need to be embedded into the base registerable degree - it’s the only viable option to deliver thousands of scope-ready graduates.

Achieving this will transform community pharmacy and ensure we can all play our part to create healthier communities.

Professor Trent Twomey is the national president of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

If you have questions, send them to scope@guild.org.au.

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Dispensary Corner

WHILE us Aussies are sweltering away in the heat of summer, the Brits are suffering from a serious case of wet weather blues.

A new study has revealed the mental toll that the UK's current weather system is taking on residents, as the country recently hit its 50th consecutive day of rain.

Scientists from the University of Portsmouth found a clear link between climate and quality of life after surveying 400,000 Brits about their emotions during different weather conditions from 1991 to 2018.

When average daily rainfall rose from 1.7mm to 4.7mm, people were around 6% less likely to report satisfaction with their life, income and health.

Comparatively, an uptick in monthly sunshine (from around 107 hours to 290 hours) boosted life satisfaction by 10.5%.

"These are not marginal effects," observed one of the authors of the study, Dr Panagiotis Tzouvanas.

"They are large, meaningful shifts in how people feel about their lives, and they are directly associated with climate-related weather changes."

The findings are reflected in a deluge of TikToks that show UK residents lamenting the weather, with one user saying there is "nothing motivating about waking up to grey skies and no sunlight for weeks".



Vitamin D deficiency linked with RTIs

NEW research led by the University of Surrey has indicated that severe vitamin D deficiency is associated with a higher rate of hospitalisation for respiratory tract infections (RTIs).

Lower RTIs (pneumonia and bronchitis) rank among the top 20 leading causes of mortality globally for individuals aged 50-74 years and in the top 10 for those aged 75 years and older.

In the largest study of its kind, researchers analysed NHS data from more than 36,000 participants in the UK Biobank to investigate the link between vitamin D status and the rate of hospitalisation due to RTIs.

They found that those with a severe deficiency (below 15 nmol/L) were 33% more likely to

be admitted to hospital for treatment than those with sufficient levels of vitamin D (at least 75 nmol/L).

"Vitamin D is vital to our physical wellbeing," explained lead author **Abi Bournot**.

"Not only does it keep our bones and muscles healthy, its antibacterial and antiviral properties are also thought to help reduce the risk of RTIs that can lead to hospitalisation.

"This research attaches hard data to support the theory.

"Despite its importance to our overall health, many people are deficient and do not meet the [recommended intake],"



she concluded.

The authors said the findings warrant further study, and point to the potential for vitamin D supplementation to reduce the risk of RTI-related hospitalisations in the future.

The paper is available **HERE**. **KB**

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