

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of the latest news, plus a full page from **TerryWhite Chemmart**.

Join the future

TERRYWHITE Chemmart's Pathway to Prescribing program provides structure and mentoring to qualify and practise at full scope - learn more on **p3**.

Ditch CPAs and restrictions, says Grattan

IN A report released today, independent public policy think tank Grattan Institute has called for an end to Community Pharmacy Agreements, suggesting "backroom deals" should be replaced by "independent decisions, as happens for other types of healthcare".

"If the Federal Government won't do that, at a minimum, patients and pharmacists should be at the table, and there should be clear public evidence to justify decisions," Grattan Institute stated in *Future pharmacy: A better deal for patients and taxpayers*.

The report raised concerns about the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's influence on funding and policy, stating that while profits for owners have surged, patients are missing out on cheaper medicines and choices about where to get them, and taxpayers are paying too much.

Among the report's other

AFTER several years of rapid change, the pharmacy workforce landscape is showing signs of stabilisation, Raven's Recruitment GM Heidi Dariz shared at the Pharmacy Careers Summit last Fri.

"As we move through 2026 and beyond, the profession appears to be entering a period of greater workforce stability," Dariz said, citing Raven's *Pharmacy Salary and Market Report*.

"Recruitment challenges remain, particularly in regional

and rural areas, but many of the acute pressures experienced in recent years have begun to ease.

Permanent pharmacist salaries have increased modestly at the lower end of the market in both metropolitan and rural areas, driven by workforce demand, cost-of-living pressures, and minimum wage adjustments, she noted.

However, salary growth for experienced pharmacists has largely stalled, as many pharmacy businesses continue to face financial constraints despite increasing professional responsibilities.

Intern pharmacists have seen wage growth mainly through award increases, although Dariz highlighted that a number of pharmacy owners are paying above award rates to secure high quality graduates and strengthen their future workforce pipeline.

Dispensary technician salaries have largely followed similar patterns to pharmacists, while retail manager salaries have risen more broadly due to the growing recognition of the importance of strong operational leadership.

Locum pharmacist rates, which rose sharply between 2020 and 2023 due to workforce shortages

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and COVID-related disruptions, have now largely stabilised.

Improved pharmacist availability, higher graduate numbers, and more predictable staffing patterns have helped create a more balanced market, Dariz noted, with permanent positions more readily filled in the last 12 months.

Looking at longer term trends, pharmacist salaries have increased by approximately 25-30% in metro areas and 35-40% in rural Australia over the past nine years, with growth slowing more recently.

Beyond pay, work-life balance remains a key priority, with flexible rosters, wellbeing initiatives, and supportive workplace cultures increasingly important for attracting and retaining talent.

At the same time, pharmacists are taking on a broader clinical role within Australia's healthcare system, delivering more services and expanding their scope of practice, yet remuneration has not always kept pace with these increased responsibilities.

The report features a breakdown of salaries by state, and also includes New Zealand data.

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Dispensary Corner

MORE than just a toothpaste flavour or cocktail garnish, mint is now getting the recognition it deserves as a low-calorie health booster.

While we commonly associate mint with fresh breath, did you know that it also helps keep the mouth healthy?

A 'SuperMint' blend containing peppermint, Japanese mint, bergamot mint and spearmint essential oils was found to help reduce bacteria linked to bad breath and gum disease, a 2024 study found.

It was also discovered that chewing fresh mint leaves can reduce bad breath by stimulating saliva production and exposing the mouth to the plant's natural antimicrobial compounds.

Mint has also been proven to help soothe cramps, abdominal pain and bloating.



New tool targets sarcopenia

A NEW survey of Australian health professionals shows that while most clinicians recognise sarcopenia as part of their clinical responsibility, routine screening remains limited in everyday practice.

Sarcopenia, which is muscle loss usually associated with ageing, affects around one in five Australians aged over 60, and is closely linked to frailty, falls, hospitalisation, and loss of independence.

However, the survey highlighted that discussions about muscle health often only occurred after patients presented with established risk factors or functional decline.

In response, a stepwise screening tool, Muscle Health Algorithm, has been developed by Australian health experts, with the support of global healthcare company Abbott, to promote earlier identification of patients at risk in primary care.

The tool, which is endorsed by the Australian and New Zealand Society for Sarcopenia and Frailty Research (ANZSSFR), is designed to integrate simple functional assessments and risk indicators into routine consultations, helping clinicians identify decline earlier and consider timely intervention.

Survey respondents identified exercise and nutrition as central to the prevention and management of muscle loss with ageing.

Adequate nutritional intake - including sufficient energy, protein and key nutrients - is essential



to support muscle maintenance, recovery and function.

"Pharmacists are often the first healthcare professional older Australians consult and can play an important role in identifying those at risk of poor muscle health," consultant pharmacist Moves Innejikian told *Pharmacy Daily*.

"By recognising warning signs such as falls, weight loss or reduced mobility, we can provide advice on physical activity and recommend the right nutrition where appropriate, as well as referring to GPs and other allied health professionals," he continued.

Innejikian noted that while sarcopenia has not traditionally been a major focus for pharmacy education, as the population ages and awareness for muscle health grows, greater education, along with practical tools such as Abbott's Muscle Health Algorithm, can help pharmacists recognise risk factors, provide evidence-based advice and refer patients back to their GPs where appropriate.

Access the tool [HERE](#). KB

Alzheimer's drug doesn't dig deep

AN AUTOPSY on a patient who received the Alzheimer's drug aducanumab has shown better clearance of amyloid in the top layers of the brain compared to the deep layers.

The drug was thought to work by removing beta-amyloid, one of the hallmarks of Alzheimer's disease (AD).

Sold under the name Aduhelm, the drug had accelerated approval in the US, however it was not approved in Australia and was discontinued in 2024 by its sponsor Biogen, which cited commercial reasons, rather than safety or efficacy concerns.

The autopsy showed the patient, who took the drug for 4.5 years, had higher levels of amyloid down in the folds of the brain compared to up on the ridges.

The authors wrote in *JAMA* that further research is needed to work out how amyloid can be cleared from these deeper layers, because extensive clearance may be needed to see a neurological benefit from these sorts of drugs.

Earlier this year, a large review concluded that anti-amyloid drugs, including aducanumab, were unlikely to have any clinically meaningful benefits for AD (*PD* 16 Apr).



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Becoming a Pharmacist Prescriber was a defining step in my career. With TerryWhite Chemmart's Pathway to Prescribing program, I had the structure, mentorship and confidence to qualify and practise at full scope. It has completely transformed the way I care for my patients.

Maree Keating,
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