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Rural pharmacists shine in WA, Tas PSA awards

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has recognised the outstanding contribution, leadership, and dedication of pharmacists in Western Australia and Tasmania at awards ceremonies over the weekend.

On Fri night, Amanda Bryce was awarded WA Pharmacist of the Year in recognition of her significant service to pharmacy practice, education, and workforce development in the state.

Well-respected among her colleagues, students, and patients, Bryce has a breadth of experience spanning community pharmacy, aged care, consultant pharmacy, and academia.

Passionate rural pharmacist Shaylee Mills was named the Early Career Pharmacist of the Year for her demonstrated leadership and mentoring in rural practice, as well as advocating for contemporary pharmacy practice and early career pharmacists across Australia.

The Intern Pharmacist of the Year award was presented to Kija

woman Emma Engelke from East Kimberley, for her commitment to patient care, in particular her outstanding initiative in providing culturally safe care and increasing community engagement during her internship in remote WA.

Celia Sansom was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of her continued contributions to the pharmacy profession through leadership, governance, and education in WA and overseas.

Integral to the implementation of professional services models in community pharmacy, Sansom remains dedicated to supporting patients in rural Narrogin.

MEANWHILE, at an event held on Sat night, Gillian Pugh was awarded Tasmanian Pharmacist of the Year, recognised for her exceptional commitment to medicine safety and access to care, delivering Home Medicines Reviews across North East Tasmania, and proving herself to be an indispensable partner in rural clinical practice.

Millicent Borowicz was named the Early Career Pharmacist of the Year for her enthusiastic, thoughtful approach to healthcare delivery in rural Tasmania, characterised



by active engagement with her community and advocating for expanded services to meet patients' needs.

The Intern Pharmacist of the Year award was presented to Corey Bowden for his strong leadership and positive influence on the health of his patients, particularly in the area of preventative health and vaccination.

Finally, having held roles in governance, education, and mentoring, Anne Todd was recognised with the Lifetime Achievement Award for her sustained and significant impact in enabling consistent access to high-quality professional learning opportunities in Northern Tasmania and beyond. *KB*

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1. Australian Government. Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. Australian Immunisation Handbook. Available at <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au>. Accessed March 2026. sanofi-aventis australia pty ltd trading as Sanofi. All rights reserved. ABN 31 008 558 807. Sydney, Australia. www.sanofi.com.au. MAT-AU-2600393 V1. Date of preparation: March 2026.

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Dispensary Corner



CUCUMBERS could be the solution for those who struggle to drink enough water throughout the day.

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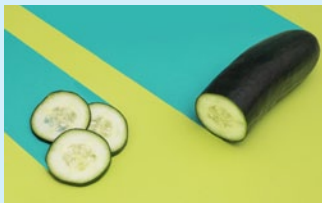
"So many people simply don't drink enough water, so if you can get some element of hydration through your food, then you're one step closer to supporting your everyday fluid intake," Jenna Hope, nutritionist and author of *How To Stay Healthy*, told the *Daily Mail*.

She pointed out that as well as offering hydration, cucumbers are also a rich source of vitamins C and K, as well as containing potassium, magnesium and antioxidants - plus, they are very low in calories and contain almost no fat.

The skin should be left on in order to get the most benefits, Hope said.

"You get maximum fibre and antioxidants if you eat cucumber unpeeled, and ideally in its solid form rather than juiced," she explained.

People who prefer the briny taste of pickles, which are essentially just preserved cucumbers, will be happy to know that they can still reap the health boost, as long as they have been fermented using traditional methods.



Call for better med cannabis screening

MORE than half of all reported adverse events involving medicinal cannabis were linked to higher-THC products, a new research from Monash University has revealed, with psychiatric disorders the most prevalent adverse reactions.

The study team examined over 1,100 adverse events involving medicinal cannabis in 614 reports made to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) between mid-2022 and May 2025.

Researchers found that Category 5 products, which contain THC concentrations ranging from 13% to more than 88%, accounted for more than half of all adverse event reports (54.1%).

Psychiatric disorders were the leading category of adverse events reported for higher-THC products, with anxiety, psychotic disorder and paranoia the most frequently reported reactions.

Fourteen cases involved suicidal ideation, suicidal behaviour or suicide attempt.

"These findings suggest that

vulnerable people are not being effectively screened and managed in clinical practice," said lead author Myfanwy Graham.

The findings are particularly concerning, given a medicinal cannabis prescribing shift in recent years from lower THC products to higher THC products, none of which have been assessed for efficacy, quality and safety by the TGA.

The current findings differ from a 2023 analysis where nervous system disorders were the leading category and most cases involved CBD and THC combo products.

Graham warned that the true number of adverse reactions is likely much greater than the data suggested, "given the well-known limitations of voluntary adverse event reporting systems".

"The fact that we are seeing this volume of psychiatric adverse reactions even with significant under-reporting should prompt a closer look at how these products are being prescribed and monitored," she said. *KB*

Perth polio finding serves as vax reminder

THE discovery of poliovirus in a sample of Perth wastewater has prompted virologists and public health experts to remind people to ensure they are fully vaccinated against the disease while it continues to circulate overseas.

Detected in mid-April, the sample contained evidence of the oral vaccine-derived poliovirus Type 2 strain, similar to that detected in Melbourne in 2024.

Australia uses inactivated polio vaccine, unlike the oral vaccine which contains the live-attenuated virus.

Health officials say this is a

single detection event, likely sourced from an overseas traveller, and poses very low risk to the population.

Professor Adrian Esterman from Adelaide University noted that childhood polio vaccination coverage in Western Australia is around 92%, and while high, "was a little below the level typically preferred for very strong population protection".

"Similar detections in other countries have often not led to cases, but they do underline the importance of maintaining high vaccination coverage and strong surveillance systems."



Weekly Comment

Welcome to *Pharmacy Daily's* weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Kate Gunthorpe**, deputy chief pharmacist, TerryWhite Chemmart.



Are you ready for next year's women's health updates?

WITH recent changes expanding access to hormonal contraceptives through community pharmacy, the key question is: is your team ready to deliver this safely and confidently?

We have a head start before they roll out on 01 Jan 2027. Use this time to train your entire team so they feel confident and comfortable supporting these services from day one.

Preparation starts with clinical confidence. While pharmacists may be trained, your broader team plays a critical role. They need to understand what the service is, who it is for, and how to support patients from first enquiry through to consultation.

Clear protocols are essential. Standardised pathways, documentation, and referral processes ensure consistency and safety, particularly in women's health where presentations can be complex.

Environment and communication also matter. Private consultation spaces and simple, clear language help patients feel comfortable engaging with these services.

These changes are only the starting point. The real impact comes from how they are delivered in practice. Learn more about TWC Women's Health Services [HERE](#).

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