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## Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today features five pages of news, including our **Beauty & Wellness** feature.

## Pharmacy Connect 2026 program out

**THE** program for this year's Pharmacy Connect conference has launched, with convenor Kos Sclavos highlighting its emphasis on practical training, new skills, and the chance to stay ahead in a rapidly evolving industry.

As the role of pharmacy professionals expands, Sclavos said it is important to work strategically to ensure equitable access to these services.

"The program is designed to offer what they need to adopt a wider range of clinical health services, as well as maintain high standards of care," he said. Find the program **HERE**.

## Anger over OCP prescribing obstruction

**THE** Victorian Government has declined to make public the advice leading to its decision to allow pharmacists to initiate the oral contraceptive pill, leading MPs to cry foul.

On 18 Mar, Opposition health spokesperson Georgie Crozier requested in parliament that "all briefings, correspondence and other documents [...] relating to the expert medical advice sought and received on the safety of pharmacists initiating supply of the oral contraceptive pill" be released.

Behind Crozier's request was concern over the implementation of the initiative against the advice of the relevant medical colleges and the Therapeutic Goods Administration (**PD 09 Mar**).

However, yesterday the government made a claim of 'executive privilege' over the document, which allows it to withhold information if the public interest in withholding it outweighs

the public interest in disclosing it.

The reasons provided for the secrecy were that the document would "reveal high-level confidential deliberative processes of the executive government, or otherwise jeopardise the necessary relationship of trust between a Minister and public officials, [and] reveal confidential legal advice provided to the executive government".

In response to the news, Crozier was reported in *AusDoc* as saying it was "a shocking decision", and "there is no reason why the government should be withholding this advice, especially when it relates to patient safety".

GP Dr Sarah Mansfield from the Greens was among the MPs who backed Crozier's motion, along with Rachel Payne and Nick McGowan.

"I think any reasonable Victorian expects government decisions that



impact the quality and safety of their health care to be informed by evidence and relevant expertise," Dr Mansfield told *Pharmacy Daily*.

"By refusing to provide these documents, it raises serious questions about how and why Victorian Labor made this decision, and whether they even sought out any evidence.

"We will be considering what further options we have to pursue this information, because pharmacists, clinicians, and the Victorian public deserve greater respect than this," she added. **KB**

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### Pharmacycle marks milestones

**PHARMACYCLE** has achieved two major milestones, having collected and recycled more than 150 million blister packs since the program began while also growing its network to more than 1,000 active drop-off locations across the country.

Head of strategy Jason Rijnbeek said the accomplishments demonstrate what can happen when sustainable solutions are made practical and accessible for communities.

“For many years, people simply didn’t know there was a way to recycle blister packs,” Rijnbeek said.

“What’s been incredible is seeing Australians actively embrace the program once they realise there’s a practical solution available.

“These milestones belong to every person, pharmacy, council, healthcare worker, community group, and partner organisation that has participated along the way,” Rijnbeek concluded.

The Pharmacycle network now includes pharmacies, hospitals, community organisations, workplaces, schools, and local government facilities across metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas.

Program lead Ursi Kernan said Pharmacycle hopes the achievements encourage even more Australians to get involved.

## Another accolade for Ego leadership

**EGO** Pharmaceuticals managing director Alan Oppenheim was last night recognised at the highest level of the Australian manufacturing industry, and was named Leader of the Year at the 2026 Endeavour Awards.

The prestigious category celebrates those who have delivered exceptional financial growth and cultural transformation, while also championing the Australian manufacturing industry on the world stage.

Oppenheim has led Ego Pharmaceuticals for over 30 years, transforming the family business into a global leader in dermatology with a presence in over 20 countries, while advocating for sovereign manufacturing capability and pursuing rigorous scientific research and development.

“I am deeply honoured by this



recognition, which I share with the 700-plus Ego staff who strive for excellence every day,” Oppenheim (pictured centre) said.

“Retaining our manufacturing in Australia is a deliberate choice that allows us to maintain the highest quality standards,” he continued.

“I am incredibly proud to lead a team that contributes so vibrantly to our national economy while improving skin health for millions globally,” he concluded.

Alan Oppenheim’s gong follows that of Ego CEO Jane Oppenheim,

who was awarded CEO of the Year last year (*PD* 14 Nov) and was inducted into the Victorian Manufacturing Hall of Fame’s Honour Roll (*PD* 10 Oct).

The Oppenheims also appeared in a new UK royal book (*PD* 07 May).

### Pharmacy spend grew to \$15.6b over the year.

Discover what’s driving the uplift.

[Read CommBank Health Insights](#)



CommBank iQ Market Monitor iQ. Health industry spending between 01 February 2025 and 31 January 2026.

### CWH spreads a little magic at NRL

**AS THE** NRL Magic Round kicks off today at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane, Chemist Warehouse is making a major play at this year’s rugby league festival with a four-day fan experience.

Providing a mix of premium hospitality and fan-first activations designed to champion health, wellness and connection, Chemist Warehouse wants every fan “to experience the magic”.

On Sat and Sun, fans will have the opportunity to unlock access

to the CW VIP Deck through an epic free fall wall challenge in the precinct, with successful participants securing premium match views, complimentary food and beverages, and Avene gift bags.

The pharmacy giant is also celebrating the community at the Women’s State of Origin match tonight, with the CW VIP Deck open to junior players alongside guests from the Queensland Children’s Hospital Foundation.

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## Have a say on dementia guidelines

A DRAFT of the first major update to the Dementia Clinical Practice Guidelines in 10 years has been released for public consultation, with pharmacists and other health professionals urged to provide feedback to inform the final publication.

The project was co-chaired by Prof Simon Bell, pharmacist and director of the Centre for Medicine Use and Safety within the Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Prof Velandai Srikanth, director of the National Centre for Healthy Ageing at Monash University.

Topics cover modern advances in dementia care, evaluating new therapies alongside support strategies like physical and cognitive rehabilitation, deprescribing, driving assessments, end-of-life communication, and non-medication strategies.

With dementia care having changed significantly since the previous edition, the updated guidelines aim to guide clinical



decision-making based on the most current evidence.

While primarily designed for medical practitioners, nurses, and pharmacists and other allied health practitioners, it is also envisaged that people living with dementia and their carers will find the finalised framework to be a valuable resource for making informed healthcare choices.

"Through the public consultation process, we look forward to further feedback from people with dementia, clinicians, support organisations, and the broader community," Prof Bell said.

Access the draft guide [HERE](#). KB

## Experts to talk guts at Star event

STAR Discount Chemist is holding an exclusive wellness event bringing together leading experts on gut health for a morning dedicated to education, empowerment and connection as part of its 'It takes guts to talk guts' campaign.

The event will take place on Fri 15 May at Adelaide's Hotel Panorama, where attendees will hear from two guest speakers - gastroenterologist Professor Robert Bryant from The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and ambassador for the Jodi Lee Bowel Cancer Foundation, Danni Duncan.

Professor Bryant will provide expert insights into the science behind gut health and how it affects people's bodies across mood, immunity and ageing, as well as common gut health mistakes, and how to restore it.

"Studies have shown a progressive loss of people's gut microbial diversity in developed

countries like Australia, often attributed to Western diets," Professor Bryant stated.

He explained that these changes have been linked to increased rates inflammatory bowel conditions, which are debilitating and ongoing for patients, with high rates of surgery, hospitalisation, poor quality of life and disability.

Duncan, a fitness and nutrition coach, was diagnosed with stage 2 bowel cancer at 39 years old, and was keen to share her story to help others.

"By speaking openly, I want to raise awareness that bowel cancer is not an older person's disease," she said, highlighting that "early action can make all the difference".

The banner group launched its 'Talk guts' campaign earlier this year (PD 19 Mar) with the aim of encouraging people to stop dismissing ongoing symptoms and seek trusted, personalised advice.

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### Time to rethink your dispensary set-up?

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## Editor's Choice: MICROSHIELD® offers skin protection for home use

*In partnership with Schulke*

For over three decades, MICROSHIELD® has delivered hospital-grade hand and skin care solutions designed to help protect everyday Australians.

Now the same high-quality, clinician-trusted formulations are available for home use and can be purchased at the local pharmacy.

The range extends beyond infection prevention to include solutions such as the pH balanced MICROSHIELD® Skin Care Cleanser and the MICROSHIELD® Moisturising Lotion.

Enriched with emollients and moisturisers to protect the skin, these formulations are fragrance- and colour-free, making them ideal for the family, including



those with sensitive skin.

They are also compatible with MICROSHIELD®'s range of antiseptics such as MICROSHIELD® 2 and MICROSHIELD® 4.

MICROSHIELD® also offers professional-grade MICROSHIELD® Angel Blue®, an

ideal choice for quick, convenient antimicrobial hand disinfection.

With a refreshing fragrance and non-sticky feel, it is infused with soothing aloe vera for hydration.

This dermatologically tested formula protects the skin's natural barrier, while keeping them clean - click [HERE](#).

## John Frieda relaunches



**ICONIC** haircare brand John Frieda has returned to its salon-focused history and undergone a relaunch, showcasing fresh packaging and updated formulations, as well as its new AuraBoost fragrance technology.

"With this relaunch, we want to connect back to these roots and honour the brand's legacy by bringing 'salon attitude everyday' to life through product innovation and the way we engage with our brand community," said John Frieda senior director Armin Haery.

According to the brand, formulations are all now free from surfactants and preservatives with shorter, more biodegradable ingredients lists that maintain salon-level results.

The brand's refreshed packaging also features a more modern, premium aesthetic, while staying true to its origins.

Meanwhile, John Frieda has developed a new signature fragrance of raspberry, rose and sandalwood, tailored for each product range: Blonde, Colour, Frizz Ease and Volume.

## Rest and recovery

**TRUE** Protein has launched a new four-in-one supplement Magnesium+ that aims to speed up muscle repair, support hormone balance, regulate the nervous system and promote deep sleep.

Formulated with Magnesium Citrate, Zinc, Glutamine and Vitamin B6, Mangesium+ addresses both the physical impact of training as well as its recovery.



## Skincare brand Bioderma expands Hydrabio range



**FRENCH** brand Bioderma has added new products to its Hydrabio range, featuring hydro-active skincare to protect and support dehydrated skin and offer long-lasting hydration.

New products include jelly cleanser Hydrabio Gel Moussant (RRP\$44.99), which removes makeup and impurities without stripping the skin, as well as the Hydrabio Serum (RRP \$54.99), that instantly moisturises the skin, leaving it visibly plumper and smoother.

Also new in the range is the Hydrabio Light Water Cream (RRP \$42.99), an ultra-light moisturiser that offers 72-hour hydration, and the Hydrabio Perfecteur Radiance Fluid (RRP \$46.99), a two-in-one smoothing moisturiser that leaves skin moisturised and radiant.

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## Dispensary Corner

A US MAN found intending to distribute methamphetamine pills shaped like video game character Mario is going to prison for six years.

According to *GameSpot*, this is not the first time Mario has been caught up in illicit drugs.

New York State four years ago issued a health alert for a potent strain of recreational drugs labelled 'Super Mario', which were found to contain a combination of extremely potent synthetic opioids and non-human sedatives.

Drug dealers are lucky they have not also been pursued for copyright infringement.

Ronnell Rogers was previously sentenced in 2022 to prison for narcotics charges.



## Complete Care opens in Brighton



**COMPLETE** Care Pharmacy in Brighton, Victoria, celebrated its grand opening last week, introducing its focus on integrated healthcare, expanded clinical services and improving the patient experience within community pharmacy.

Attendees included senior representatives from across the pharmacy and healthcare sectors, local government representatives, business and education leaders, industry partners and members of the community.

The official ribbon cutting was led by DBG Health chairman and group CEO Dennis Bastas and National Pharmacies CEO Mark Smith.

Complete Care Pharmacy founder and managing director Kristina Fox said the new store reflects where community pharmacy is heading.

"Brighton represents what the future of healthcare can look like when pharmacists are empowered to work at full scope," Fox said.

"It's been incredibly rewarding to see both the team and the local community embrace the model so positively," she added.

Smith noted the transition was already delivering benefits for both the pharmacy team and patients, with improved efficiency for pharmacy teams creating more time for meaningful patient care.

## GLP-1 pills help maintain weight loss

A **NEW** study has shown that taking oral GLP-1 RA orforglipron following a weight loss regimen can help maintain losses, potentially addressing a common finding that many people who lose weight, whether through injectable GLP-1 receptor agonists or dieting, often regain some or all of it when treatment ends.

The team from Weill Cornell Medicine in the US randomised almost 400 participants who had already lost weight through injectable tirzepatide or semaglutide to a further year of either orforglipron or a placebo.

Of those who took orforglipron, between 75-79% maintained weight loss, compared to 38-49% of those who took the placebo.

Pointing out that its use may avoid some practical difficulties linked to injections, including transportation and cold storage, the authors concluded that switching to orforglipron "may be an effective approach for maintaining weight loss for those who do not want to continue injectable therapy".

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