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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news, plus a front cover wrap from **Independent Pharmacies Australia**, and a full page from **Bernie Burn Cream**.

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Reform PBS or fall further behind, warns peak body

AUSTRALIANS are increasingly being pushed to "the back of the global queue" for innovative medicines, and risk falling further behind without major reform of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), said a new report from Medicines Australia.

Patients now wait an average of 3.6 years for access to treatments already available overseas, and only 26% of new medicines available in comparable OECD countries were funded in Australia, the peak body highlighted in its report *Access Denied*, which is the result of consultation with more than 30 of the top global innovative medicine companies.

This has resulted in out-of-pocket costs for 43% of Australians, who are prescribed medicines not listed on the PBS.

In addition to long wait times for PBS listing, the peak body also warned that patients may be disadvantaged by new US 'Most Favoured Nation' (MFN) pricing policies that have reshaped the

global medicines market.

MFN makes countries like Australia less attractive for early medicine launches, as cheaper prices here will force down prices in the far larger - and therefore more lucrative - US market.

Medicines Australia has called for an increase in PBS spending as a proportion of GDP, highlighting the case of the UK, where a deal with the US brokered off the back of MFN saw a commitment to doubling spending on new medicines from 0.3% of GDP in 2026 to 0.6% by 2036.

At 0.26% of GDP, Australia spends a lower share of its income on innovative medicines than other high income countries (0.31% on average, and 0.34% in the EU), a figure further decreasing as a proportion of GDP over time.

"The PBS remains one of Australia's greatest public policy achievements, but the world has changed dramatically since it was designed," said Medicines Australia CEO Elizabeth de Somer, also



pointing to the advent of medicines that are more targeted, more personalised and more complex.

"Without reform, Australians risk falling further behind comparable countries in gaining access to the latest treatments," she warned.

The chair of Patients Australia Michele Robbins said, "For Australians living with serious, life-threatening or debilitating illness, waiting years for medicines already available overseas is far too long.

"We are drifting towards a two-tiered system where access depends on financial means rather than medical need.

"This is not the Australian way and people are being left behind." Read the report **HERE**. KB



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Dispensary Corner

ONE zap to the brain could ease the suffering of the millions of people around the world who experience chronic pain.

Researchers at the University of Exeter in England have discovered that using a form of ultrasound on the brain can reduce symptoms.

They gathered research participants who were chronic pain sufferers, and conducted transcranial ultrasound stimulation (TUS) on the part of the brain responsible for chronic pain - the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex.

Despite experiencing no immediate relief, the participants reported a greater reduction in pain around 28-55 minutes after the procedure.

"We found that targeting a specific brain region involved in pain processing can alter how pain is perceived and change how this area communicates with other parts of the brain's pain network," explained Dr Sam Hughes from the University of Exeter.

The researchers believe the findings highlight the potential of TUS as a non-invasive therapeutic treatment, at a time when demand for chronic pain treatment continues to grow.

Biosimilars key to PBS savings

IN THE wake of last week's 2026-27 Federal Budget, the Generic and Biosimilar Medicines Association (GBMA) has welcomed the government announcement that it will begin consultation on options to ensure Australians have fast access to life-saving medicines.

Potential measures include changes to prescribing practices to consider whether biosimilar medicines should become the default for new prescriptions, and reduced out-of-pocket medicines costs for patients.

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said, "The generics and biosimilars sector is a critical ingredient to sustainability, quality and affordability, from a national perspective and for patients.

"We want to get the benefit for biosimilars from an affordability perspective as we have in the small molecule sector," he continued.

"And we don't do that here in Australia to the extent that other comparable countries do."

Advancing biosimilar policy reform has the potential to improve patient access and strengthen the long-term sustainability of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), the peak body pointed out.

"Progress on biosimilar policy is a critical step forward," said GBMA CEO Nikki Lorenz.

"Targeted reform presents a clear opportunity to unlock further capacity within the PBS, supporting reinvestment in innovative



treatments while ensuring more Australians can access the medicines they need."

As global pricing dynamics, including policies such as Most Favoured Nation, increase pressure on countries like Australia to invest more in new innovative medicines (see **page one**), it becomes even more important that the PBS can sustainably fund both current and future treatments, said Clint Holland (**pictured**), Sandoz GM Australia and New Zealand.

"Achieving appropriate savings when medicines come off patent, including through the uptake of biosimilar medicines, helps create the headroom needed to reinvest into new medicines," Holland told **Pharmacy Daily**.

"This is ultimately what supports faster and broader access for Australian patients to the latest treatments, while maintaining the long-term sustainability of the PBS.

"At this time, we look forward to hearing more details about the consultation process and we will work closely with the government, industry, clinicians, pharmacists, and importantly, patient advocacy groups," he concluded. *KB*

Free MenB vax for Tassie infants

THE Tasmanian Government will fund a Meningococcal B vaccination program for infants from six weeks up to two years of age as part of the 2026-27 State Budget.

"Our \$4 million investment will both strengthen Tasmania's immunisation efforts and remove a significant out-of-pocket cost for families, supporting families to keep their children safe and healthy," said Health Minister Bridget Archer at yesterday's announcement.

The free MenB vaccinations, including catch-up vaccination, will be available from Jul 2026.

Mayne expands

MAYNE Pharma Group has announced that its wholly owned specialty pharmacy, Adelaide Apothecary, will expand its US operations to a new facility in Lexington, Kentucky.

This will support the next growth phase for DistributeRx, its direct-to-patient distribution platform which launched operations in Mar 2026, allowing the group to serve more patients more quickly.

Capital expenditure is expected to be in the order of US\$2 million (A\$2.8 million).

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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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