

## Consumers 7CPA input call

**THE** Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) is seeking a voice at the table when negotiations begin for the next Community Pharmacy Agreement (CPA) following confirmation by Health Minister Greg Hunt that the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) will also be involved (*PD* yesterday).

CHF CEO Leanne Wells commented, "We urge government to include consumers in these discussions which involve the provision of more than \$20 billion over five years for the dispensing of prescribed medicines to the community.

"While today's statement is a welcome move away from the bilateral negotiations between the retail pharmacy sector and government, it is time that consumers also have a seat at the table in deciding how best to serve the interests of patients and community," she said.

Wells also noted the PSA's new report *Pharmacists in 2023* which highlights that pharmacists are custodians of medicine safety, responsible and accountable for safe and effective use of medicines.

"The report advocates more patient-centric care which the Consumers Health Forum strongly supports... the role of the pharmacists as dispensers, quality use of medicines advisers and deliverers of aspects of primary health care is an important area of reform.

"However, there remains a significant gap in ensuring consumers always receive the information they need about their medication," she claimed.

Wells added that CHF's own research showed that "consumers trust pharmacists, value community pharmacy and want pharmacy services to be opened up and integrated with the rest of the health system.

"Consumers have formed specific perceptions and preferences based on their experiences with the sector and these should be heard and considered as part of discussions to shape the future of pharmacy," she concluded.

**MEANWHILE** the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has also hailed "broader pharmacy representation" for the next CPA, saying that "all pharmacists, practising in all settings, should have input into the important funding agreement".

SHPA CEO Kristin Michaels said while the agreement was community-facing "the reality is medication-related incidents permeate through all healthcare settings, and programs to support optimal medicines management cannot be segmented".