



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Take the pressure down Grand Final weekend

Australians are being urged to take the pressure down in the lead up to the AFL and NRL Grand Finals next weekend by getting a blood pressure check for the sake of their hearts.

TerryWhite Chemmart and the Heart Foundation have teamed up to offer free blood pressure checks until 30 October to put the spotlight on high blood pressure (hypertension) as a leading risk factor for heart disease.

With 100,000 fans expected to descend on the MCG next weekend, an estimated 34,000 people (or 34 per cent of Australians<sup>i</sup>) at the game will suffer high blood pressure. For close to 80,000 NRL fans attending next Sunday's Grand Final at ANZ Stadium, an estimated 27,200 will have high blood pressure.

National Heart Foundation Group CEO, Adjunct Professor John Kelly AM said "Too many Australians don't know they have high blood pressure and it's putting their lives at risk.

"More than four million Australians have high blood pressure that is either untreated or treated inadequately.<sup>ii</sup> High blood pressure is known as the silent killer because there are no obvious signs or symptoms.

"While blood pressure naturally goes up and down, persistent high blood pressure is a cause for concern as it increases your risk of heart attack, stroke and kidney disease."

A recent Heart Foundation Heart Watch<sup>iii</sup> survey of nearly 6000 Australians aged 30 to 65 years found only five per cent were aware high blood pressure is a risk factor for heart disease. Yet heart disease kills one Australian every 30 minutes<sup>iv</sup>, which is close to the average length of an AFL quarter.

"The good news is high blood pressure can be controlled by making a few lifestyle changes. Being physically active, smoke-free, eating a balanced diet and maintaining a healthy weight can help people 'keep their pressure down'. In more serious cases, blood pressure can be managed using medications prescribed by a health professional.

"You won't know if you have high blood pressure until you have it checked. This is the ideal time to do it," Adjunct Professor Kelly said.

TerryWhite Chemmart pharmacist Maria Keskeridis said the risk of high blood pressure increases with age. She recommended Australians over the age of 45 years, and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples over the age of 35 years, to get their blood pressure checked regularly.

"When you visit your local TerryWhite Chemmart for a free blood pressure check, one of our pharmacists or pharmacy assistants will use an inflatable cuff that goes around your arm to check your blood pressure. This reading measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart pumps and when it relaxes between each beat.

"If your reading is high, we recommend you visit your local doctor for a heart health check."

TerryWhite Chemmart CEO Anthony White said “It’s vitally important for all Australians to take care of their heart health by monitoring their blood pressure every two years to reduce their risks. It only takes a few minutes out of your day and it may just save your life.”

“By partnering with the Heart Foundation to offer free blood pressure checks at TerryWhite Chemmart, we’re helping people take steps towards ‘kicking their own health goals’ this season.”

Mr White said that while TerryWhite Chemmart pharmacies offered blood pressure checks all year round, the AFL and NRL Grand Finals serve as perfect reminders for people to get their blood pressure tested if they hadn’t done it recently.

Drop into your local TerryWhite Chemmart between 20 September and 30 October and get a free blood pressure check. It only takes a few minutes and it may just save your life. [Find out more.](#)

While you’re there, please help the Heart Foundation save a life by making a small donation at the checkout. Your donation will help us continue our fight against heart disease – the single biggest killer of Australians.

**ENDS**

## **ATTACHED IMAGE**

Footy Fan gets match fit for finals with a blood pressure check.

## **MEDIA ENQUIRIES**

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### **About the Heart Foundation**

The Heart Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to fighting the single biggest killer of Australians – heart disease. For close to 60 years, it’s led the battle to save lives and improve the heart health of all Australians. Its sights are set on a world where people don’t suffer or die prematurely because of heart disease. To find out more about the Heart Foundation’s research program or to make a donation, visit [www.heartfoundation.org.au](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au) or call 13 11 12.

### **About TerryWhite Chemmart**

Following the merger of Terry White Group and Chemmart in late 2016, TerryWhite Chemmart is now Australia’s largest retail pharmacy brand, with approximately 500 stores around the country. TerryWhite Chemmart delivers high-quality, accessible, and cost-effective community-based health care services.

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<sup>i</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, *National Health Survey: First results, 2014-15*, ABS cat. no. 4364.0.55.001, March.

<sup>ii</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, *National Health Survey: First results, 2014-15*, ABS cat. no. 4364.0.55.001, March.

<sup>iii</sup> National Heart Foundation Heart Watch survey, June 2018.

<sup>iv</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017, *Causes of Death 2016*, ABS cat. no. 3303.0, September