



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Sunday, 9th July 2023

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Sun Herald](#)** (page 4) reports the Australian Sonographers Association has called for sonographers to be regulated by the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia, citing a rise in insurance claims for incorrect or missed diagnoses based on poor-quality ultrasounds. A Department of Health and Aged Care spokesperson said the system is "well regulated" by governments, independent regulators and employers.
- **[The Sunday Mail Brisbane](#)** (page 15) reports the Department of Health and Aged Care has warned that respiratory syncytial virus is spreading at ten times the rate of last winter. Australians are urged to be vigilant for cold-like symptoms, as the disease can be fatal to infants, the elderly and the immunocompromised. *Also reported by:* [Sunday Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Sunday Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Sunday Tasmanian \(Hobart\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).
- **[The Sun Herald](#)** (page 1) reports six children presented to NSW emergency departments between June 21 and 29 with severe reactions after vaping, with symptoms including vomiting, seizures and loss of consciousness. Some of the vapes were purchased illegally from sellers

on Snapchat, NSW Health said. A regulatory crackdown on e-cigarettes aimed at curtailing the black market in nicotine vapes was announced by Minister for Health Mark Butler in May.

- **The Sunday Mail Brisbane** (page 10) reports Far North Queensland breast cancer survivor Sharyn Washington has accused Queensland Health of ignoring her case after waiting 614 days for reconstructive surgery following a mastectomy. Minister for Health Shannon Fentiman said she will urge health services to investigate after Ms Washington wrote to the Minister and her state and federal representatives Cynthia Lui and Bob Katter. Mr Katter said he had passed the letter on to federal health minister Mark Butler. *Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#).*
- **The Sunday Age** (page 1) reports mothers and newborns are being discharged from hospital after a record-low average of two days following an uncomplicated birth, with one in 10 leaving within 24 hours, prompting concern that women are being sent home in pain and without appropriate support in order to free up hospital beds. "When it comes to discharge, it shouldn't be a matter of being told you're ready to go," said Australian College of Midwives chief midwife Alison Weatherstone. "It should be a conversation with the woman to prepare for discharge from the facility." Also reported by: [Sun Herald \(Sydney\)](#).
- **The Sunday Herald Sun** (page 7) reports more than a third of Victoria's emergency presentations for sports-related concussions in the five years to 2022 were for youths aged 10-14, according to the Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit. Macquarie University neurologist Dr Rowena Mobbs warned hospital data under-reports the issue and young people are at risk of more severe or prolonged concussion.
- **The Sunday Mail Adelaide** (page 12) reports a Senate inquiry has heard people with ADHD are increasingly turning to self-medication with illicitly-obtained drugs due to a lack of public services and long waiting lists. "Unfortunately, access to care is limited, with many public sector mental health services not providing any ADHD services," RACGP president Nicole Higgins said. *Also reported by: [Sunday Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Sunday Mail Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#), [Sunday Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).*
- **The Sunday Herald Sun** (page 18) reports an investigation has uncovered 50 illegal solarium operations within local sheds, bedrooms and garages in Melbourne's suburbs, sparking calls for a crackdown on the cancer-causing machines. "We have taken a strong stance on solariums since they were banned, seizing and destroying many beds across the state," a Victorian Department of Health spokesperson said. *Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).*

MINISTER BUTLER

Teens buy vapes online, end up in emergency

Sun Herald, General News, 09/07/2023, Mary Ward, Page 1

Health authorities have raised the alarm after six young people presented to NSW emergency departments within days of each other experiencing symptoms including seizures, loss of consciousness and vomiting after vaping. NSW Health says some of the vapes were purchased from sellers on social media app Snapchat. [...] In May, federal Health Minister Mark Butler announced a raft of regulatory changes for the sale of e-cigarettes intended to crack down on the widespread black market that has allowed nicotine vapes to be easily purchased illegally.

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My 614-day wait for surgery

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 09/07/2023, Kylie Lang, Page 10

It has been 614 days since Sharyn Washington had a mastectomy - and she is still waiting for reconstructive surgery, accusing Queensland Health of "hiding" information about "unacceptable" delays. Mrs Washington, 40, struggles daily with anxiety over her "incomplete treatment". [...] July 6: Bob Katter says he's forwarded Sharyn's letter to federal Health Minister Mark Butler.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#).

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DEPARTMENT

Families at a loss over systemic image problem

Sun Herald, General News, 09/07/2023, Mary Ward, Page 4

Concerns about patients receiving incorrect or missed diagnoses due to poorly performed ultrasounds have prompted calls for sonographers to be brought under the purview of a regulator. Australian Sonographers Association chief executive Jodie Long, who is leaving the role this week, said there had been a rise in insurance claims that blame sonographers for poor-quality images. [...] A spokesperson for the federal Department of Health and Aged Care said sonographers worked in a "well regulated" system with responsibilities shared between governments, independent regulators and employers.

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Potentially deadly virus incidents surge

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 09/07/2023, Jasmine Kazlauskas, Page 15

A highly infectious virus is sweeping the nation at an alarming rate. Australians are being urged to remain vigilant against the spread of respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV, as cases surge across the country. The number of people infected with the virus has increased, with some states now reporting 10 times the number of cases compared to the equivalent period last year, according to the Department of Health and Aged Care.

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60,000 scripts for just one area

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 09/07/2023, Brad Crouch, Page 13

The Onkaparinga area has emerged as South Australia's ADHD medication capital, with almost 60,000

prescriptions being issued in a single year. Other hot spots that topped 20,000 PBS scripts include Playford, Salisbury, Tea Tree Gully and Marion. Data from the federal Health Department on a variety of ADHD medications issued under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme shows none of the 28 Statistical Area 3 (SA3) locations in South Australia recorded a drop in medications issued between 2017 and last year.

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Finding a public toilet near me

Brisbane Kids, Other, 08/07/2023

There is nothing worse than enjoying a family outing in the beautiful Australian sunshine, when all of a sudden someone announces, 'I'm busting!' This usually results in the adults frantically looking around for the nearest amenities and bundling up the family to rush to the toilet before it is too late. [...] The interactive National Public Toilet Map is a wonderful service, funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.

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CORONAVIRUS

Covid risk for vulnerable

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 09/07/2023, Sue Bailey, Page 11

With the number of Tasmanians who have died with Covid reaching 301, the Tasmanian Greens say protections for people with disability are inadequate. Greens leader Cassy O'Connor says, at a bare minimum, masks should be mandatory in all care settings including hospitals, aged care facilities, community and in-home disability supports.

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Tribunal rejects mask claims

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 09/07/2023, Patrick Billings, Page 23

A Sunshine Coast woman has failed to force an apology and compensation out of a cafe owner after she was refused service for not wearing a mask during the pandemic. Anne Crowley was a longterm customer of Cuba St Coffee Roasters at Marcoola on the Sunshine Coast in August 2021 when she was refused service for not wearing a face mask, an anti-discrimination tribunal was told.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

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POPULATION HEALTH

COVID shake-up has mixed our drinks

Sunday Age, General News, 09/07/2023, Melissa Cunningham, Page 2

Feel like your drinking habits changed during the pandemic? You would be right. There are hundreds of thousands more Australians drinking than there were before the COVID-19 lockdowns, even though alcohol consumption has fallen from the heights of the pandemic.

Also reported by: [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#).

Party girl blues

Sun Herald, Sunday Life, 09/07/2023, Elli Jacobs, Page 8

Getting drunk is seen as a rite of passage for many teens, but it can be the introduction to an unhealthy relationship with alcohol. Elli Jacobs speaks with three women who started drinking young but have now quit for good.

Also reported by: [Sunday Age \(Melbourne\)](#).

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Doctors urged to tread lightly on weight

Sun Herald, General News, 09/07/2023, Amber Schultz, Page 9

Australian of the Year and body positivity advocate Taryn Brumfitt is calling for GPs to avoid discussing patients' weight during standard consultations. "Weight bias is the last remaining legal form of discrimination," she said. It comes as new research highlights the pervasiveness of weight stigma in healthcare settings.

Also reported by: [Sunday Age \(Melbourne\)](#).

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Land of the giants

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 09/07/2023, Brad Crouch, Page 5

Australian youngsters are shooting up, with the average five-year-old boy now 3.2cm taller than his 1990 counterpart and the average five-year-old girl taller by 2.5cm. However, the rise of youngsters has its limits and experts believe Australians are nearing their maximum genetic height limit.

Also reported by: [Sunday Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Sunday Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Sunday Mail Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#), [Sunday Tasmanian \(Hobart\)](#).

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Calls for lights out on deadly beds

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 09/07/2023, Suzan Delibasic and Olivia Jenkins, Page 18

Potentially deadly solariums are covertly thriving in a black market of homes and businesses across Melbourne as authorities turn a blind eye to the cancer-causing devices. A three-month Sunday Herald Sun investigation can reveal that with dozens of illegal solariums operating across the city, laws outlawing commercial tanning beds are failing.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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Mary Papanicolaou, whose decades of daily smear tests laid the basis of cervical screening

ABC Online, Other, 08/07/2023, Belinda Smith

The next time you book yourself in for a cervical screen, spare a thought for the woman who endured a vaginal smear every day for more than 20 years. Her name was Mary Papanicolaou, and it's thanks to her decades of dedicated swabbing and sampling that she and her pathologist husband George developed the cervical cancer screening method we know today as the Papanicolaou or Pap test. "I think Mary's contribution was obviously a key foundational contribution – equally, I would say, as important as George Papanicolaou's contribution," says Karen Canfell, director of the Daffodil Centre and chair of Cancer Council Australia's Cancer Screening and Immunisation Committee.

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PRIMARY CARE

New mums rushed out of hospital hours after birth

Sunday Age, General News, 09/07/2023, Henrietta Cook, Page 1

Australian women and newborns are being discharged from hospital in record time after childbirth, with almost half sent home one day or less after an uncomplicated birth. This compares with about one in four women a decade ago, according to Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data that has sparked concerns mothers and babies are leaving too soon as hospitals seek to free up beds.

Also reported by: [Sun Herald \(Sydney\)](#).

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Short postnatal stays should be by choice

Sunday Age, Editorials, 09/07/2023, Page 24

There is a great deal of information for a new mother to absorb preparing to leave maternity hospital. Often within hours of delivery, and its inherent physical and mental demands, she is expected to take on all the responsibilities and needs of the new infant as well as resuming the "normality" of everyday family life.

Also reported by: [Sun Herald \(Sydney\)](#).

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C-section injuries on the increase

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 09/07/2023, Rebecca Whitfield-Baker, Page 20

More than a third of babies born in Australia are now delivered by caesarean section but doctors and midwives lack clarity on the safest way to respond to a common complication that can have heartbreaking consequences, new research finds. The team of researchers, mostly from the UK but including Flinders University's Annette Briley, has found it is a global problem, with rising caesarean birth injury rates.

Also reported by: [Sunday Tasmanian \(Hobart\)](#).

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Bell pushes for regional hospice

Border Watch, Other, 08/07/2023

Member for Mount Gambier Troy Bell has put forward an official motion to State Parliament regarding regional hospices. Mr Bell spoke to the chamber recently as part of his ongoing advocacy for an independent hospice facility in Mount Gambier/Berrin.

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Channel 9, National Nine News (Weekend), 08/07/2023, Tracy Vo

The Prime Minister has touched down in Rockingham ahead of the byelection calling on the former premier for support. He was there to open a new bulk-billed urgent care facility that WA's nurses union says the state will struggle to staff.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

What kids do behind closed doors

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 09/07/2023, Julie Cross, Page 26

Real texts from cyberbullies have been released to show parents the types of shocking messages children are sending each other. It comes as the eSafety Commission exclusively revealed "serious

cyber-bullying" involving under-14s has more than tripled compared with before the pandemic, with 230 complaints in May, the largest on record.

Also reported by: [Sunday Mail Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#), [Sunday Tasmanian \(Hobart\)](#).

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The dire upshot of OUR ADHD crisis

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 09/07/2023, Brad Crouch, Page 12

People suffering attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms are selfdiagnosing, self-medicating and resorting to black-market drugs due to long waits and high costs of seeing a specialist - if they can find one. Submissions to a senate inquiry into the issue now under way paint a bleak picture of life for people seeking help.

Also reported by: [Sunday Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Sunday Mail Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#), [Sunday Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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Phone calls a barrier to help for young people who prefer to text

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 09/07/2023, Mary Ward

More funding will be directed towards Lifeline's text and webchat services in NSW amid concerns making a phone call could be a barrier to younger generations seeking help. The state government is pledging \$8.2 million over five years to expand the helpline's mental health crisis services as cost-of-living pressures intensify.

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Tamworth nursing students ready to help fill the gap in healthcare

Northern Daily Leader, Other, 08/07/2023, Rachel Clark

As the ongoing shortage of healthcare workers across Australia has left hospitals and aged care facilities calling out for more nurses, student nurses from TAFE are stepping up to help fill in the gap and provide much needed relief to the wider nursing sector.

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

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SPORT

Kids face a 'hidden epidemic'

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 09/07/2023, Sarah Booth, Page 7

Sports-related concussions were responsible for nearly 2900 Victorian emergency department visits in five years, with football linked to one in four cases and youths vastly over-represented. Data from Monash University's Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit reveal 10 to 14-year-old patients made up a huge 39 per cent of cases, followed by 15 to 19-year-olds (24 per cent) and five to nine-year-olds (13 per cent).

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Bots & docs: it's a health revolution

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 09/07/2023, Brad Crouch, Page 22

Artificial intelligence is sparking a healthcare revolution that will create jobs, cost jobs, free clinicians from repetitive tasks and eventually may lead to robot surgeons, a leading expert in the field says. It will turbocharge diagnosis of rare diseases and even sound the alert before diseases appear as people get personal healthcare computer assistants and even "digital twins".

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Renowned Gold Coast scientist Professor Mark von Itzstein eyes pandemic 'magic pill'

Gold Coast Bulletin, Other, 08/07/2023, Ann Wason Moore

The Gold Coast's own world-leading scientist, citizen of the year and Officer of the Order of Australia is officially stepping down from the ground-breaking institute he founded. But don't be mistaken. Just because Professor Mark von Itzstein is retiring his title as director of Griffith University's Institute for Glycomics, does not for a moment mean he is retiring from research.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Closing the Gap: KEEDAC and SWAMS to share in \$3.4m Aboriginal organisation grant

The State Government has announced that 16 Aboriginal organisations will receive a share of a \$3.4m grant to support the delivery of community services with \$250,000 going to organisations operating in Narrogin. Kaata-Koorliny Employment and Enterprise Development Aboriginal Corporation will receive about \$100,000 and the South West Aboriginal Medical Service has been awarded \$150,000 to fund early childhood care and development initiatives.

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OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Channel 7, Seven News (Weekend), 08/07/2023, Rebecca Maddern

There's been an alarming surge in the number of RSV cases being diagnosed across the country. In some states, cases of the potentially deadly respiratory virus have increased almost tenfold.

Also reported by: [Channel 7 \(Adelaide\)](#).

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