



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Sunday, 30th July 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [Sun Herald](#) (page 1) reports NSW Greens are pushing the state government to bring forward debate on drug reforms including decriminalisation and pill testing, fearing opportunities for change will be lost while Labor's promised drug summit remains unscheduled. Sydney is being wracked by a wave of drug-related gang violence that has prompted the creation of a special 100-strong police taskforce.
- The [Sunday Age](#) (page 1) reports previously-unseen bidding documents for Victoria's hosting of the Commonwealth Games outline a much more modest event than the one abandoned by the state government two weeks ago. Original plans, costed at \$1.3 billion in 2021, were limited to three regional cities and made use of existing infrastructure, in contrast to the six-centre, capital works-intensive scheme whose claimed \$6-7 billion cost led Premier Daniel Andrews to call off the event.
- The [Sunday Tasmanian](#) (page 1) reports Royal Hobart Hospital has opened a new sleep medicine centre, making specialist on-site diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders available to uninsured Tasmanians for the first time. "Once we've dealt with a large clinical backlog, we're very hopeful of moving on to doing some research," said RHH head of respiratory medicine Dr

Nick Harkness. "Australia is a world leader in sleep medicine and particularly in clinical research for sleep disordered breathing."

- The **Sun Herald** (page 6) reports Prime Energy, a drink banned in Australia for its dangerously high caffeine content, has spawned a thriving black market in Sydney. A legal uncaffeinated version called Prime Hydration is being traded as a status symbol among school-aged fans of the products' YouTuber figureheads, stoking fears that children are being drawn into risky energy drink use. "It's slickly marketed, it's packaged in a way that is much more enticing for young people, brought to them by social media influencers, and that combination is a perfect storm for driving people's habits," said AMA NSW president Dr Michael Bonning.
- The **Sunday Age** (page 10) reports mental health experts are pushing for stricter social media content moderation as adolescents are increasingly being encouraged to self-harm by trends on popular apps, especially TikTok. "There is this sense of being part of something. It creates a community," Monash Health associate professor Michael Gordon said. "It can actually be a very dark place ... a rabbit hole, where you kind of get sucked down into this echo chamber of these very negative thoughts." *Also reported by: Sydney Morning Herald (Online).*
- The **Sunday Herald Sun** (page 11) reports the Therapeutic Goods Administration has ordered the removal of 513 online advertisements in the last year for the banned tanning drug Melanotan II. "Melanotan, along with a range of other products that are marketed as image-enhancing, like peptides and synthetic human growth hormones, are increasing in popularity," the TGA said in a statement. "Young people are particularly vulnerable to the marketing of these products as they seek 'miracle' solutions to body and performance pressures." *Also reported by: Sunday Telegraph (Sydney), Sunday Mail Brisbane (Brisbane), Sunday Mail Adelaide (Adelaide), Sunday Tasmanian (Hobart).*
- The **Sunday Telegraph** (page 12) reports COVID-19 has killed more than 5000 Australians so far this year but less than half of us have received a booster shot in the last six months. Among aged care residents only around 60 percent are up to date, leading Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler to urge Australians to get their boosters and highlight their effectiveness in aged care settings. "At the start of the pandemic, one in three cases in residential aged care resulted in death. In the most recent summer wave, that fell to just one in 40 cases," Minister Butler said. *Also reported by: Sunday Herald Sun (Melbourne), Sunday Mail Brisbane (Brisbane), Sunday Mail Adelaide (Adelaide), Sunday Tasmanian (Hobart), Sunday Territorian (Darwin).*
- The **Sunday Telegraph** (page 17) reports nurses in NSW have said they have been told to clean soiled patients with washcloths instead of disposable wipes, limit the use of incontinence products, and ration or even avoid the use of gloves, in response to a call by the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association to share the most "outlandish cost-cutting measures" at their places of work. The Association's assistant general secretary Michael Whaites says the stories are symptomatic of a general nursing supply shortage. "We hear of nurses having to go from ward to ward looking for a [blood pressure] cuff, the caps for the thermometers, the leads for the monitors, there's just a general shortage of the day-to-day equipment that's needed," said Mr Whaites.

MINISTER BUTLER

Covid's back to get you

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 30/07/2023, Charles Miranda and Julie Cross, Page 12

Covid-19 is killing on average 25 people in Australia every day, with more than half the nation not getting any form of booster shot in the past six months. In the latest national snapshot of the virus, four in 10 agedcare residents have still not received their latest jab despite authorities warning they remained vulnerable to infection. [...] Health and Aged Care Minister Mark Butler said vaccinations had proven to work in aged-care settings and urged people to get their boosters.

Also reported by: Sunday Herald Sun (Melbourne), Sunday Mail Brisbane (Brisbane), Sunday Mail Adelaide (Adelaide), Sunday Tasmanian (Hobart), Sunday Territorian (Darwin).

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MINISTER WELLS

Joan Hobbs' death at Kirrawee nursing home: Her family reveal they were informed of her passing by email

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 29/07/2023, Sarah Liversidge and Padraig Collins

The family of an elderly woman tragically beaten to death at a Sydney nursing home have revealed they were told about the horrific incident via email. Joan Hobbs, 89, was on July 17 beaten 'black and blue' with a walking frame by a male resident at the IRT Thomas Holt Aged Care Centre in the southern Sydney suburb of Kirrawee. [...] Meanwhile, Aged Care Minister Anika Wells said: 'This is why we mandated 24/7 nursing in all residential facilities'.

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DEPARTMENT

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CORONAVIRUS

This is ruining my life

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 30/07/2023, Adella Beaini, Page 12

For 16 months, Melanie Broadley has been living a nightmare. The 32-year-old from Brisbane – who ironically is a postdoctoral researcher looking at the psychological aspects of living with a chronic illness – is among thousands of Australians quietly suffering with debilitating symptoms from long Covid.

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

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She's trapped in nightmare

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 30/07/2023, Adella Beaini, Page 13

Sophie van Reijswoud went from a bright, bubbly and sporty girl to a teen slowly wasting away. The 15-year-old got Covid in March 2022 and her parents say she has never recovered. She has spent nearly a year of the past 18 months in a hospital.

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

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We have to admit that Covid isn't over yet

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 30/07/2023, Professor Steve Robson, Page 82

Covid has really been an extraordinary story and I think difficult to grasp because it's out of the range of experience and really nothing of this magnitude has happened for 100 years, so it has been a big learning curve for every single person. If we look at the data we see the effect around us at the moment, we know Covid is the third-most common cause that Australians still die.

Also reported by: [Sunday Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Sunday Mail Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#), [Sunday Territorian \(Darwin\)](#).

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Covid is still a lethal threat

Sunday Telegraph, Editorials, 30/07/2023, Page 84

Face masks, lockdowns and social distancing seem a lifetime ago, and – understandably – Australians have sought to move on physically and mentally from the mayhem created by the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of us lost loved ones, many of us lost our jobs and, for a period, all of us were forced to abandon the kind of basic human social norms of interaction that define us as a community.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

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POPULATION HEALTH

What to know before giving your teen non-alcoholic beer or wine

ABC Online, Other, 29/07/2023, Kellie Scott

Alcohol-free alternatives for beer, wine and spirits have boomed in recent years and, as a parent, you might be wondering if they are a safe option for your booze-curious teen. Head to parenting expert Google, however, and you'll find very little guidance on this. That's because we don't have any data on young people and these alternatives, explains Dr Amy Pennay, a senior research fellow from La Trobe University's Centre for Alcohol Policy Research.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

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PRIMARY CARE

Nurses 'told to reuse wipes'

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 30/07/2023, Emily Kowal, Page 17

Nurses claim they are being forced to reuse contaminated wipes, some covered in faecal matter, as part of shocking cost-cutting measures. A social media post by NSW Nurses and Midwives Association calling for members to share their workplace's most "outlandish cost-cutting measures" has revealed a number of horrifying claims about hospitals and health centres.

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Unlocking benefits of good sleep

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 30/07/2023, Sue Bailey, Page 1

A new state of the art sleep medicine centre – the first of its kind in the public health system – is up and running at the Royal Hobart Hospital. With inadequate sleep affecting between 33 and 45 per cent of Australians, Tasmanian doctors are hailing the new centre which, as well as diagnosing and treating sleep disorders, also will undertake important research.

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Endometriosis care forces Alice Springs locals to travel far, spend big for treatment

ABC Online, Other, 29/07/2023, Lara Stimpson

Georgie Hynes suffers from endometriosis so severe, she is considering having her uterus surgically removed. A born and bred Alice Springs resident, she has battled the chronic disease since her first menstrual cycle. In her home town and the community she loves, she says she didn't receive the care she needed. Instead, she felt dismissed, and unheard. It took interstate trips and tens of thousands of dollars to find a medical team who supported her.

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UTI treatment added to NSW pharmacy prescribing trial

Canberra Times, Other, 30/07/2023, Kathryn Magann

Women suffering from urinary tract infections (UTIs) can now receive treatment and medicine without first having to see a GP. A NSW government trial treating basic health complaints at the local pharmacy is expanding from tomorrow to include women with uncomplicated UTIs.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Yahoo! News Australia \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

TikTok cited in warnings over self-harm trends among youth

Sunday Age, General News, 30/07/2023, Melissa Cunningham, Page 10

Rising numbers of adolescents are picking up dangerous self-harming trends on popular social media apps, say mental health experts, who are pushing for Australia to strengthen its online content moderation policies. Monash Health child psychiatrist, associate professor Michael Gordon, said TikTok was the standout app of concern and that usage in teenagers had soared during the pandemic.

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

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Nicole called an ambulance for help. She ended up shackled to a bed

Sunday Age, General News, 30/07/2023, Charlotte Grieve, Page 14

When Nicole Lee threw a plastic cup of tea at a wall at the Northern Hospital in Epping, by her own admission she had "lost touch with reality". Lee's weight was dangerously low. She had fasted for two weeks and underwent emergency surgery after a self-harm incident. Her brain was starved, she says, and she tried to escape. In response, two security guards shackled her arms and legs to a bed for six hours.

Domestic abuse and suicide: a hidden tragedy

Illawarra Mercury, Other, 29/07/2023, Laura Brooks

When I was 12 my grandmother suicided. Throughout my early years, when she was alive, and after she was gone, I sought to understand why she did not want to stay among the living. When I was seeking answers, I never once stopped to consider the impact the ongoing abuse my grandmother experienced at the hands of my grandfather, which most likely occurred from the time they were married, quite possibly before.

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

We want a licence to give gift of life

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 30/07/2023, Samantha Landy, Page 35

The majority of Australians want the ability to register as organ and tissue donors when renewing or applying for their driver's licence, new research shows. Six in 10 respondents to a YouGov poll were in favour of having this power – which is supported by the Organ and Tissue Authority (OTA) – with backing rising to 71 per cent among Baby Boomers.

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

'We never forget our donor's gift of life'

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 30/07/2023, Mercedes Maguire, Page 37

Ruby England has been a "completely different child" since receiving a new kidney, her grandmother says. Donna England will never forget the words the doctor uttered five years ago, when she took her then four-year-old granddaughter to hospital on the advice of her GP: "She has end-stage kidney failure".

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'Resilient' Xander rallies

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 30/07/2023, Amber Wilson, Page 17

For two days and two nights, Xander Redman survived without a liver. The young Wynyard boy, who had his first liver transplant as a baby, had received a new liver but it had clotted off at the two main vessels. With his body going into toxic shock, and his pregnant mum unable to donate, Xander's grandmother stepped up to the plate as a "living donor".

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SPORT

Faster, higher, stronger, dearer: Games' true cost

Sun Herald, General News, 30/07/2023, Shane Wright, Page 26

In almost 3300 days, athletes from around the world will march into the Gabba on what will hopefully be a warm July evening to start the 2032 Brisbane Olympics. Fifty thousand fans and members of the Olympic family will cheer. Billions of people around the globe will be glued to their televisions, smartphones or laptops as the athletes' oath is read out.

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

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Three-city Games plan that ran out of control

Sunday Age, General News, 30/07/2023, Chip Le Grand and Patrick Hatch, Page 1

The Victorian government's original plan to host the 2026 Commonwealth Games aimed to control costs by limiting events to the state's three largest regional cities - Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo - and making use of existing sports venues and infrastructure, a previously unpublished bid document reveals. By the time Premier Daniel Andrews dumped the Games two weeks ago, planning for the event was sprawled across six regional cities, with extensive capital works or construction of temporary venues required at 10 sites and the government's estimated cost blowing out to beyond \$5 billion.

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Knock-on effect

ABC Online, Other, 29/07/2023, Ashleigh Barraclough, Sian Johnson and Natalie-Whitin

For competitive gymnast Josh, two heavy falls during training were enough to set his ambitions off course. With a growing focus on the impacts of concussion in elite sport, experts say more work is needed to protect young people.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Weight cycle is food for thought

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 30/07/2023, Laura Placella, Page 17

Aussies' weight cycles fluctuate twice a year like a "yo-yo" and more than our counterparts in the

northern hemisphere, a world-first Australian study has revealed. Researchers from the University of South Australia found that the weight cycles of adults Down Under go "up in summer, down in autumn, up in winter, down in spring".

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How lugging the groceries might help stave off cancer: study

Australian Doctor, Other, 29/07/2023, Carmel Sparke

Running for the bus and taking the stairs may help ward off cancer, with Australian-led research showing that less than five minutes of incidental vigorous exercise a day can be oncoprotective. University of Sydney authors say 3.5 minutes of intense cleaning and carrying groceries was linked to an 18% lower incidence of cancer versus those who did not get their heart racing.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Crackdown on 'Barbie drug'

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 30/07/2023, Suzan Delibasic and Olivia Jenkins, Page 11

The Therapeutic Goods Administration has removed hundreds of illegal advertisements from social media platforms spruiking the sale of illegal "Barbie drug" Melanotan-II. The Sunday Herald Sun can reveal the TGA has a number of investigations underway on the promotion of the banned tanning drug, which is readily available in the forms of nasal sprays and injectables through dodgy online sellers.

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

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OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

No date for Labor's drug summit as violence rages

Sun Herald, General News, 30/07/2023, Amber Schultz, Page 1

The Greens and Legalise Cannabis Australia Party are fighting to place drug reform back on the agenda with the state government yet to announce details of its promised drug summit. It comes amid a spate of shootings following the killing of a one-time cocaine kingpin in Bondi last month, with five people shot in five days in Sydney last week.

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FOOD STANDARDS

Fears for kids primed for caffeine hit

Sun Herald, General News, 30/07/2023, Mary Ward, Page 6

A dangerously caffeinated drink promoted by YouTube personalities is driving a black market in Sydney after it was banned from sale for not complying with safety standards. Prime Energy, which has twice the permitted caffeine content for a beverage under the Australian and New Zealand Food Standards Code, is being sold for up to \$17 a can in convenience stores and online.

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