



Australian Government  
Department of Health  
and Aged Care

# TODAY'S NEWS

Thursday, 17th August 2023

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[Canberra Times](#)** (page 1) reports that ACT Health Minister Rachel Stephen-Smith has confirmed that the child-at-risk health unit at Canberra Hospital will undergo a review of its training accreditation. Ms Stephen-Smith has stated that the review is in response to "concerns received by the Royal Australian College of Physicians about training due to workforce shortages of senior staff specialists."
- **[Courier Mail](#)** (page 1) reports that Queensland Health has confirmed that a four-bed room in the maternity ward at Gladstone Hospital was used for flu patients as flu season stretches the hospital's bed capacity. Queensland Health stated that the flu patients posed no risk to the patients on the maternity ward as they were "away from other patients and were under the observation of appropriately trained staff."
- **[The Australian](#)** (page 3) reports that the CommBank Pharmacy Insights 2023 report has revealed that chemist will start to charge for previously free services such as blood pressure checks, medication home deliveries, wound dressing and baby weighing to offset the impact of the federal government's 60-day dispensing policy. NSW pharmacists will protest the 60-day dispensing scheme in Sydney on Thursday, while CommBank Health chief Albert Naffah states

that many chemists are "considering whether keeping their workforce and opening hours intact is financially viable." *Also reported by: [Barrier Truth](#)*

- **[The Australian](#)** (page 7) reports that the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup has made a \$1bn, making it the most successful Women's World Cup in history. Pressure has been put on Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Sports Minister Anika Wells to fund grassroots soccer, especially for much-needed facilities for girls, due to the success of the Matildas.
- **[The Australian Financial Review](#)** (page 8) reports that Australian scientists have found a way to wipe memory out of iPS cells, changing the way stem cells are made for research and treatment. Previously iPS cells could retain an epigenetic memory of their original adult cell, creating problems over the long term during research, with Professor Ryan Lister stating that "Years of basic research to understand the epigenome reset process was key to making this advance." *Also reported by: [The Australian](#), [Daily Telegraph](#)*
- **[Herald Sun](#)** (page 11) reports that the peak medical bodies are calling for the government to take action to fix doctors shortages in regional Victoria as they claim that the shortages are harming patients' health. A Victorian government spokesman has stated that GPs need to be paid more to attract international GPs faster, while a spokeswoman for Federal Health Minister Mark Butler stated the government will invest \$163m for training and incentives to attract and keep regional health workers.
- **[Herald Sun](#)** (page 12) reports that school students across Victoria are using phone apps to sell vapes at school. VicHealth has launched Victoria's first anti-vaping mass media campaign to curb the rate of vaping among schoolchildren, with VicHealth CEO Sandro Demaio stating that "We really have to look at all of the sources of these illegal products and look at really tougher measures to protect young people." Federal Health Minister Mark Butler previously claimed the rate of vaping a "major threat to Australia's success in tobacco control."
- **[Canberra Times](#)** (page 17) reports that Victorian-based Dr Gaby Bolton won a class action law suit against Peninsula Health on Friday, winning more than \$8000 in unpaid, unrostered overtime. The case has provided hope for junior doctors suing the ACT government and Calvary Health Care for unpaid overtime. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has stated that governments facing lawsuits need to settle the cases quickly as the country is "desperately short of doctors and nurses."
- **[Hobart Mercury](#)** (page 17) reports that the GP crisis in Tasmania's rural and remote communities was a key topic of discussion at the 2023 Bush Summit. Royal College of General Practitioners Tasmania chair Tim Jackson stated that it needs to be easier for overseas doctors to come to Australia, "At the moment, we're competing with places like Canada and New Zealand that can turn people around in about three to six months." *Also reported by: [Hobart Mercury](#)*

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## MINISTER BUTLER

### Vic win gives hope to ACT class action

Canberra Times, General News, 17/08/2023, Lanie Tindale, Page 17

A "landmark" class action suit has given hope to junior doctors suing the ACT government and Calvary for alleged unpaid, unrostered overtime. [...] Federal health minister Mark Butler told ABC RN Breakfast on Monday all governments facing claims "would want to make sure that they clean this up very quickly."

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### Regions crying out for doctors

Herald Sun, General News, 17/08/2023, Sarah Booth, Page 11

Doctors shortages in regional Victoria are harming patients' health and will get worse unless the government takes urgent action, peak medical bodies have warned. [...] A spokeswoman for Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the former government's six-year Medicare rebate freeze ripped "billions of dollars out of primary care" and pointed to Labor's \$1.5bn - or 3.6 per cent - rebate increase and \$220m GP grants.

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

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## Students turn vape vendor

Herald Sun, General News, 17/08/2023, Suzan Delibasic & Susie O'Brien, Page 12

Explosion in schoolyard e-cig trade via apps Schoolchildren as young as 12 are using mobile phone apps to conduct clandestine vape deals in toilet blocks during lunch breaks. [...] In May, federal Health Minister Mark Butler dubbed the widespread sale of illegal nicotine vapes a "major threat to Australia's success in tobacco control" and announced \$737m for efforts to fight the scourge.

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## Medical scans can cost hundreds in out-of-pocket expenses, and radiologists warn it's getting worse

ABC Online, Other, 16/08/2023, Alison Branley

First Jo O'Halloran got the life-altering news she had an inoperable cancer. Then the bills began to arrive.[...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the federal government had delivered the largest increase to the Medicare rebate in more than 30 years.

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## AMA and medical colleges call for immediate action to clear surgery backlog

Australian Medical Association, Other, 16/08/2023

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) has joined with medical colleges to call on the federal and state and territory governments to take immediate action to tackle ever-growing surgery waiting lists, with hundreds of thousands of Australians often waiting years in terrible pain. The AMA; Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS); Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO) and Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) have written to federal Health Minister, Mark Butler, calling for action to get public hospitals out of logjam.

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## World Health Organization recommends countries update their national COVID-19 plans

Croakey, Other, 16/08/2023, Alison Barrett

Australia and other member states of the United Nations have been urged to update their national COVID-19 plans, according to standing recommendations issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) last week. [...] Croakey asked the Federal Department of Health and Aged Care and the office of Health Minister Mark Butler whether Australia would update our national COVID-19 plan, as recommended.

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## Call to Clear Surgery Backlog

Tasmanian Times, Other, 16/08/2023

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) has joined with medical colleges to call on the federal and state and territory governments to take immediate action to tackle ever-growing surgery waiting lists, with hundreds of thousands of Australians often waiting years in terrible pain. The AMA; Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS); Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO) and Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) have written to federal Health Minister, Mark Butler, calling for action to get public hospitals out of logjam.

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## ABC, ABC News, 16/08/2023, Juanita Phillips

Patients could be paying hundreds of dollars more for critical medical scans because they're not

shopping around. An ABC investigation into out-of-pocket costs has found imaging centres charge some of the largest gap fees outside of hospitals and the charges vary dramatically, all depending on where you live. Radiology artists say they're battling with rising rents and wages, as well as a 20-year Medicare freeze that was only lifted in 2020. Health Minister Mark Butler says bulk billing for radiology is still higher than the general Medicare average for bulk billing.

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### **NBN Coffs Harbour, NBN News, 16/08/2023, Natasha Beyersdorf and Gavin Morris**

A doctor shortage is plaguing the Clarence Valley with GPs describing the situation as critical. Federal member for Page Kevin Hogan calls on the Federal Government to provide more financial incentives and reverse its decision on distribution priority areas for foreign trained doctors. But the Health Minister, Mark Butler, says no such decision has been made and there are yearly payments to operate in areas like the Clarence Valley based on activity levels and that it is investing in a \$1.5 billion indexation boost to Medicare rebates, increasing the amount that doctors receive, as well as tripling the bulk billing incentive.

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### **LA FM, Mornings with Richard Perno, 16/08/2023, Richard Perno**

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists and Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists have written to the Federal Health Minister Mark Butler, calling for action to get public hospitals out of logjam and the group says that while the national hospital funding agreement needs tweaking, a new agreement won't be introduced until 2025.

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### **ABC Broken Hill, Breakfast, 16/08/2023, Andrew Schmidt**

Interview with Alex Page, Director, Outback Pharmacies. Pharmacy Guild says since April the double dispensing changes will cause supply shortages and financially impact pharmacies. This has been denied by the Health Minister, Mark Butler, saying 6 million Aussies will be able to collect that two-month supply rather than one when they pick up their script. Page says they're going to cut opening hours in Broken Hill from 28 August. He explains they're saying to save jobs and adapt to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme changes. He adds if their customers are upset, they should take it to Minister Butler as they don't want to cut operating hours either.

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### **ABC News, Mornings, 16/08/2023, Chris Mitchell**

The ABC has found patients are facing wide variations in these gaps based on the clinic they attend for a pregnancy ultrasound. The out of pocket costs can vary by \$150 between locations, while for a lower back CT scan it's nearly \$200 and prices can vary by \$50 for the same X-ray at different outlets of the same radiology chain. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says the Federal Government delivered the biggest across the board increase to the Medicare rebate in more than 30 years. He states the one-off increase that they delivered in the budget to the Medicare rebate, which covers diagnostic imaging and radiology and pathology as well as general practise and other medical services, was bigger than what was delivered by the former government in 6 or 7 years. The Australian Diagnostic Imaging Association says prices do vary based on each clinic's unique costs and patients should use their referral to shop around.

Also reported by: [ABC News \(Melbourne\)](#).

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## **MINISTER WELLS**

### **Operation Matildas and the \$1bn Cup**

The Australian, Edition Changes - All-round Metro, 17/08/2023, John Stensholt & Sophie Elsworth, Page 7

It is the first \$1bn Women's World Cup in history, riding the wave of Matildas mania that has gripped Australia [...] Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Sports Minister Anika Wells were attending Wednesday night's game, as pressure on the government - which is putting \$240m towards an AFL stadium in Hobart - to fund grassroots soccer, especially for much-needed facilities for girls inspired by the Matildas, heats up.

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## 'Older people must be consulted': Peak advocacy bodies call for public feedback

Aged Care Insite, Other, 16/08/2023, Arshmah Jamal

The federal government has asked for feedback from caregivers, stakeholders, older people, their families, and their carers on the framework of the new Aged Care Act. Last Wednesday, Aged Care Minister Anika Wells posted on X (formerly known as Twitter), urging people to have their say.

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## Input sought on new Aged Care Act

Community Care Review, Other, 16/08/2023, Christopher Kelly

The government is seeking feedback from providers, stakeholders, older people, their families and carers on the framework of the new Aged Care Act Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells posted a video message on social media Wednesday urging interested parties to have their say.

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## 4BC, 07:00 News, 16/08/2023

Department of Health and Aged Care figures show just 81% of facilities have achieved 24/7 coverage, just 1% the level estimated by Federal Aged Care Minister Anika Wells last year. Grant Thornton Australia's Darrell Price told The Australian there has only been a marginal improvement in the sector and recommends a stronger recruitment drive for nurses. A national plan has been made to protect women and end domestic violence.

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## DEPARTMENT

### Doctor drought a blight on bush

Countryman, General News, 17/08/2023, Caitlyn Rintoul, Page 4

WA regional towns suffering a severe drought are forking out more than a million dollars to attract a GP and calling for urgent government intervention to help carry the cost. [...] A Federal Health Department spokesman said the regional difficulties were recognised and the Government had invested in several initiatives to alleviate pressures.

Also reported by: [Kimberley Echo \(Kununurra\)](#), [Great Southern Herald \(Katanning\)](#), [Narrogin Observer \(Narrogin\)](#).

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## Remote Aussies behind in health

Queensland Country Life, General News, 17/08/2023, Helen Walker, Page 6

Remote Australians Matter is the name of a newly established organisation born as a result of a group of like-minded people concerned about the lack of access to appropriate primary health care in the outback. The group is made up of five passionate Australians headed up by the chair, Annabelle Brayley of Morven.

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## How did aged care fare in 2022?

Aged Care Guide, Other, 16/08/2023, David McManus

The Department of Health and Aged Care released the latest Financial Report on the Australian Aged Care Sector 2021-2022, which offered providers insight into performance across the industry. The residential care sector operated at a loss of \$2.264 billion dollars in total an average net loss per resident per day of \$32.97.

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## Cost of e-script texts covered under new national program

Australian Doctor, Other, 16/08/2023, Antony Scholefield

Health officials are urging GPs to check they are registered with eRx before the 15c subsidy scheme for e-prescribing text messages is rolled into a national e-script program next month. [...] However, a \$100 million national Prescription Delivery Service using the eRx script exchange software will now cover the costs, the federal Department of Health and Aged Care says.

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## CCQ hosts local clinical society event

Bundaberg Now, Other, 16/08/2023, Meta Time

Local primary healthcare workers are invited to attend a clinical society event hosted by Country to Coast Queensland (CCQ) in Bundaberg on 29 August at 5.30 pm. [...] CCQ is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that delivers Primary Health Network programs on behalf of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care.

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## Health sector urged to engage with global push for regulation of artificial intelligence

Croakey, Other, 16/08/2023, Melissa Sweet

Yet more alarms have been sounded about the potential for artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare to cause harm, including through undermining patient privacy and health equity. [...] It says responsibility for delivering the strategy should rest with the Department of Health and Aged Care, with the Australian Digital Health Agency and the Therapeutic Goods Administration assuming joint responsibility, adding that it sees no need to establish a new separate regulatory and oversight organisation.

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## How does our healthcare stack up?

Pharma In Focus, Other, 16/08/2023

Australians will participate in an international survey to find how our health system stacks up to similar countries in terms of the patient experience in being treated for the top conditions addressed by

pharma companies. The Department of Health and Aged Care has tapped the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care to run the survey in Australia.

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## First global health survey on chronic conditions

Retail Pharmacy Assistants, Other, 16/08/2023, Katrina Crawford

Australia is taking part in a groundbreaking international study into community-based health care that will explore the outcomes, experiences and satisfaction of patients who are treated in GP practices. [...] In Australia, the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) is implementing the survey with ORIMA Research, on behalf of the Department of Health and Aged Care.

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## Cancer battle's cruel financial twist as access to best treatment denied

The Western Weekender, Other, 16/08/2023, Makayla Muscat

A young man fighting a rare and aggressive bone cancer has been refused government assistance to receive life-saving treatment overseas. [...] She said they received a letter from the Department of Health and Aged Care last month, saying that Ross was not eligible because the proposed overseas treatment or an effective alternative treatment must not be available in Australia in-time to benefit the applicant.

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## ABC Newcastle, Mornings , 16/08/2023, Paul Turton

Interview with Yuting Zhang, Professor of Health Economics, University of Melbourne on Medicare levy surcharge. Zhang says it is one of the maybe recent largest evaluations done by the Department of Health and Aged Care. She thinks the Government is evaluating in terms of what should be changed and what is working well.

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## CORONAVIRUS

### Key biological pathway reveals insights into long COVID brain fog

Retail Pharmacy, Other, 16/08/2023

The identification of a metabolic pathway could lead to answers and new treatments for those experiencing brain fog because of long COVID. Researchers from UNSW Sydney and St. Vincent's Hospital have identified a key pathway, involved in inflammation, which appears to be activated in people with long COVID who have symptoms of brain fog'.

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### Residential care Covid cases ease

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 16/08/2023, Christopher Kelly

As winter draws to a close, cases of Covid in residential aged care homes are falling, according to government figures. From a peak of 3,782 recorded on 1 June and in spite of concerns of a winter rebound the number of weekly Covid cases has been dropping steadily ever since.

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

### Skills shortage

The Australian, Commercial Property, 17/08/2023, Hari Hara & Priya Kannan, Page 1

Prior to the pandemic, the ABS projected the population to hit 30.6 million by 2032. But this year it was revised downward to 29.6 million.

Also reported by: [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Australia\)](#), [The Australian \(Australia\)](#).

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## Aussie researcher joins global dementia team

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 16/08/2023

Dr Anita Goh has joined the Alzheimer's Association's ISTAART Advisory Council, the National Ageing Research Institute has announced. A global collaboration of scientists, clinicians and dementia professionals, the International Society to Advance Alzheimer's Research and Treatment shares knowledge in the pursuit of advancing the research and treatment of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

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## Resthaven launches dementia respite program

Community Care Review, Other, 16/08/2023, Natasha Egan

Aged care and retirement living provider Resthaven has launched a government-funded short-stay program to support older South Australians living with dementia to stay at home for as long as possible. The program Staying at Home in Regional South Australia aims to provide education and support to carers whilst their loved one is cared for in the same location by experienced staff.

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## ABC Radio Adelaide, Mornings, 16/08/2023, David Bevan

Interview with Angela Raguz, General Manager, HammondCare Daw Park. She answers questions from listeners regarding HammondCare's latest aged care facility in Daw Park. Asked on the cost of aged health care at the facility, Raguz explains that HammondCare doesn't charge any more than other aged care service providers. As a non-profit organisation, she says HammondCare focuses more on the needs of its residents rather than the costs. Raguz notes that around 40% of their residents are financially disadvantaged and those that can afford to fully pay for their services may do so.

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## POPULATION HEALTH

### Online myths linked to rise in unplanned pregnancies, experts claim

The Australian, Other, 16/08/2023, Eleanor Campbell

An expert panel has said social media myths could contribute to high rates of unplanned pregnancies in Australia and urged for broader education on birth control. "There has been a lot of misinformation around pain and IUD insertion," Professor Deborah Bateson from the University of Sydney said.

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

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### Adrian Kat | Ignoring dental problems can have a high cost later on

Illawarra Mercury, Other, 16/08/2023, Adrian Kat

What seems to be forgotten in the treatment of a patient's oral health is the direct connection between the mouth to the body. The mouth is more than a smile, it's a health barometer and can serve as a gauge to a patient's overall health.

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## CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS



## Imugene in \$60m cash call for new deal; Bells on ticket

Australian Financial Review, Companies and Markets, 17/08/2023, Page 14

Imugene was leveraging a new cancer treatment licensing deal yesterday, asking investors for a \$60 million cash injection split evenly between a placement and a share purchase plan.

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## Gene test seizes back control from epilepsy

Herald Sun, General News, 17/08/2023, Sarah Booth, Page 5

A cutting-edge genetic test can diagnose the cause of a baby's epilepsy months or even years before traditional tests, a world-first study has found, allowing them to receive targeted treatment. The right treatment could spare them from suffering hundreds of seizures and the serious, lifelong cognitive and developmental delays these can cause.

Also reported by: [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#).

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## Concerned about the potential toll of vaping

Western Advocate, General News, 17/08/2023, Paul Toole, Page 6

There is rising concern about the amount of e-cigarette use, specifically in our young people. I recently met with Cancer Council NSW to discuss new data that shows a drastic increase in 16- to 24-year-olds trying e-cigarettes or vapes.

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## Bronchial thermoplasty 'highly effective' for long-term severe asthma control

Australian Doctor, Other, 16/08/2023, Rachel Fieldhouse

There were substantial reductions in the need for maintenance therapy and the frequency of exacerbations requiring steroids. Nearly half of adults with severe asthma taking maintenance oral steroids were able to completely cease treatment within six months of bronchial thermoplasty, Australian doctors report.

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## Stronger protections needed for frontline first responders battling cancer and PTSD

West Australian, Other, 16/08/2023, Martin Aldridge

From cataclysmic bushfires, record-breaking floods, cyclone impact and car crashes, our volunteers are on the scene rendering aid to those in need. But the very nature of their duties also exposes our volunteers to unique physical and mental health risks, including an increased risk of cancers due to exposure to hazardous materials, as well as far greater incidences of post-traumatic stress disorder.

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## 5AA, Afternoons, 16/08/2023, Jade Robran

Not everyone may be aware of this, but cardiovascular disease is the highest killer of women in Australia. What are some things that could be done to reduce the risk? One of the most important things you can do is act on the signs. They aren't always as obvious as chest pain for women. If something feels unusual, don't avoid the signs and put off reaching out to your GP.

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## More accreditation at risk

Canberra Times, General News, 17/08/2023, Lucy Bladen, Page 1

The child-at-risk health unit at Canberra Hospital will undergo a review of its training accreditation following concerns about senior specialist shortfalls. The review will take place outside of the normal cycle after the accreditation body, the Royal College of Physicians, received these concerns.

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## Maternity, flu ward

Courier Mail, General News, 17/08/2023, Hayden Johnson, Page 1

Patients suffering from respiratory issues have been placed in the Gladstone Hospital maternity ward as the flu season stretches its bed capacity. [...] The maternity ward was on bypass for almost a year in what the Australian Medical Association of Queensland president Maria Boulton declared a "medical emergency".

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

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## Patient waiting times to worsen

Hobart Mercury, General News, 17/08/2023, Tia Ewen, Page 15

A Tasmanian medical expert is concerned issues of patient wait times and bed shortages will worsen if the government doesn't do anything about it. Royal Hobart Hospital medical specialist and chairman of the medical staff association Dr Frank Nicklason found patients over 85 years old were waiting longer when presenting at the emergency department.

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## Warrnambool Base Hospital ED expansion works set to begin

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 17/08/2023, Ben Silvester, Page 5

Construction work is about to start on a long-awaited expansion of Warrnambool Base Hospital's emergency department. The undersized ED has presented problems in recent years as the region's population has grown, with the flow of patients through the department becoming a major issue and causing lengthy wait times.

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## Coroner upholds family's concerns

Burnie Advocate, General News, 17/08/2023, Sandy Powell, Page 9

After daughter's death, family complained about NWRH procedure A CORONER has upheld a family's concern about their daughter's treatment at the North West Regional Hospital (NWRH) before her death. Rebecca Richardson was 29 years old and had significant mental and physical health issues when she died at East Devonport between May 7 and 9, 2019.

Also reported by: [Launceston Examiner \(Launceston\)](#).

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## Shocking waits for State-run disability dental service leaves special needs people going years without care

West Australian, Other, 16/08/2023

People with disabilities are waiting years for dental care due to a specialist State-run service having its capacity dramatically slashed, while a promised new one has not even started construction. For people with disabilities, keeping their mouth open and sitting still in a dentist chair for an extended period of time can be hugely distressing and sometimes impossible to do, requiring them being put under a general anaesthetic for just a basic check.

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## National bulk-billing GP chain Our Medical demanding patients hand over data or pay

7news.com.au, Other, 16/08/2023, Dominique Tassell

The demand has been condemned as ethically problematic', an expert says. A national bulk-billing GP chain is demanding patients hand over their data or pay a private fee for medical appointments.

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## **New PCOS guidelines back hormone test as diagnostic aid**

Australian Doctor, Other, 16/08/2023, Heather Saxena

Elevated serum anti-müllerian hormone can now be used as an alternative to pelvic ultrasound to aid diagnosis of PCOS, according to updated guidelines released this week. Although testing for anti-müllerian hormone (AMH) is not MBS subsidised, lead author and endocrinologist Professor Helena Teede says the cost of an ultrasound is "comparatively" higher.

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## **Prominent GP reprimanded for VAD paperwork error**

Australian Doctor, Other, 16/08/2023, Heather Saxena

The tribunal said its decision sent an "emphatic message" about strictly complying with legislation on VAD. A GP advocate for voluntary assisted dying has been found guilty of professional misconduct and fined \$12,000 over paperwork that was not signed properly.

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## **Qld gov responds to Little Haven funding crisis**

Cairns Post, Other, 16/08/2023, Christine Schindler

The Qld government has thrown Gympie's Little Haven Palliative Care a crumb of hope after details of its funding crisis were revealed, promising to review the way it calculates its funding. After a week of highlighting the importance of Little Haven's contribution not just to the community, but as a sustainable model of end-of-life community care to regional Queensland, the Qld government has agreed to conduct a review of the funding arrangements to organisations like Little Haven.

Also reported by: [Gympie Times \(Online\)](#).

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## **GP clinics to face closure in "tax grab"**

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 16/08/2023

The doctor's peak body is calling on the NSW Gov't to step in to save local GP practices at risk of closure in rural and regional NSW due to a new application of payroll tax. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) has written to the NSW Premier Chris Minns calling for independently contracted GPs to be exempt from additional payroll tax and for the gov't to urgently confirm that general practices are not being targeted for retrospective tax collection.

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## **Merome Beard supports reforms to abortion laws and pushes for wraparound women's healthcare**

Kalgoorlie Miner, Other, 16/08/2023, Anna Cox

North West Central MP Merome Beard has backed reforms to WA's abortion laws being debated in Parliament, saying the Bill will require universal changes to be made to women's healthcare. In Parliament last Thursday, Ms Beard shared her admiration at her peers who had shared their own experiences with abortion, thanking them for their courage and strength.

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## **Improvements to health care on national cabinet agenda**

Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, Other, 16/08/2023, Tess Ikonomou

Health reform will dominate the next national cabinet meeting in a bid to create a patient-centred system. [...] An Australian Medical Association annual report showed public hospital performance was at its lowest ever, floundering under the weight of ballooning surgery waitlists and emergency department presentations.

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## MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

### Down dads affect kids

Daily Telegraph, General News, 17/08/2023, Page 5

A global review has confirmed there is a significant link between a father's depression and a higher risk of mental health issues in their children. The Curtin University-led review looked at 16 global studies undertaken between 2002 and 2021 and found that children faced a 42 per cent increased risk of depression if their father was depressed.

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### Taimi Allan has been appointed as Mental Health Commissioner for South Australia

Adelaide Now, Other, 16/08/2023, Brad Crouch

A woman who benefited from the state's mental health system in her youth has come full circle, as she becomes the new Mental Health Commissioner. Attempting to function at work while in the wrong headspace can be a lot to handle.

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### Nature prescriptions improve physical and mental health

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 16/08/2023, Anmj Staff

A prescription for the outdoors from your GP or nurse practitioner may improve your health, according to research. UNSW Sydney researchers have found that nature prescriptions' a recommendation to spend time in nature provided both physical and mental health benefits. The researchers analysed 28 studies that tested nature prescriptions and their ability to improve health in real-world patients.

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### Lismore Lifeline Crisis Support reopens with pledge to reduce alarming suicide rates, help region recover from flood trauma

Gold Coast Bulletin, Other, 16/08/2023, Catherine Piltz

After working out of caravans in their backyard for the past 18 months, a cornerstone of hope in the Lismore community has turned the lights on again. Here's the latest.

Also reported by: [Lismore Northern Star \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

### Thirroul's women-only trauma hospital treats 800 patients in first year

Illawarra Mercury, Other, 16/08/2023, Kate Mcilwain

A year ago, Felicity\* says she was at rock bottom. The 40-year-old experienced childhood neglect, sexual abuse, rape and domestic violence over many years, and had been diagnosed with complex post-traumatic stress disorder.

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### Mental health commissioner to 'drive change' in SA

In Daily, Other, 16/08/2023, David Simmons

South Australia has appointed its first full-time mental health commissioner since 2019, with the government acknowledging the previous system of part-time officials didn't work well. Taimi Allan will relocate from New Zealand to South Australia in October to assist the government in fixing issues with the state's mental health services.

[Read More](#)

### ABC News, News Breakfast, 16/08/2023, Michael Rowland & Lisa Millar

Interview with Rob Walker, Deputy President, New South Wales Primary Principals Association. Walker

says a survey conducted in 2019 of Australian principals and the survey showed us that anxiety was a significant issue in about 81% of schools. He notes according to the Australian Psychological Society, about 6.9% of 11-year-olds are diagnosed with an anxiety disorder and that figure could be as high as 19.6%. He discusses the Anxiety Project which deals with the issue.

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## CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

### **ABC, 7:30, 16/08/2023, Laura Tingle**

Adelaide's Flinders Medical Centre have a world breakthrough in its in-vitro fertilisation programme. They've achieved the first pregnancy from frozen and thawed eggs. You always think with IVF and infertility, a lot of it's the media in particular and a lot of everything around.

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## HEALTH WORKFORCE

### **Eye care needs a visionary**

Herald Sun, General News, 17/08/2023, Robyn Riley, Page 10

A major shortage of eye specialists in parts of rural Victoria is putting vulnerable patients at risk of going blind for treatable conditions. One of the hardest hit regions is Mildura and surrounding areas in Victoria's northwest where some patients are waiting up to nine months to see an eye specialist and then potentially a further year for surgery.

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### **Health woes put brakes on regions**

Hobart Mercury, General News, 17/08/2023, Rob Inglis, Page 6

The GP crisis in Tasmania's rural and remote communities has been identified as the main challenge preventing the regions from unleashing their full potential. Industry bosses, business leaders, community representatives and politicians met to hash out the issues facing regional Tasmania at the Mercury's 2023 Bush Summit at Blundstone Arena on Wednesday.

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

[Read Plain Text](#) [Read More](#)

### **Country town gets first GPs in 100 years**

Ballarat Courier, General News, 17/08/2023, Gabrielle Hodson, Page 5

It's not easy doing a story with Gordon's first doctors in 100 years. Trade was very brisk - and the waiting room full - at the combined bulk-billing GP clinic and pharmacy on Tuesday.

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## TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

### **Chemists put a price on services**

The Australian, General News, 17/08/2023, Natasha Robinson, Page 3

Chemists will begin charging customers for blood pressure checks, medication home deliveries, wound dressing and baby weighing all services previously provided for free as community pharmacies face reduced revenues amid plunging confidence in the sector's financial outlook. The CommBank

Pharmacy Insights 2023 report reveals four out of five community pharmacies intended to begin charging for previously free services to offset the impact of the federal government's 60-day dispensing policy, with 90 per cent expecting profits to decrease by one-third.

Also reported by: [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [Barrier Truth \(Broken Hill\)](#),

[Read Plain Text](#) [Read More](#)

## State government to top up ORT payments

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 16/08/2023, Josh Estey

Community pharmacies in one jurisdiction are set to receive additional payments to deliver Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) funded opioid replacement therapy. The Tasmanian government will provide top up payments to community pharmacies to cover the shortfall in funding of the Commonwealth's ORT program compared to with the old state-based service.

Also reported by: [Pharmacy Daily \(Online\)](#)

[Read More](#)

## The trial that could revolutionise medicine safety

Australian Pharmacist, Other, 16/08/2023, Chloe Hava

Rather than managing adverse events after the fact, a new data-powered system has been designed to proactively tackle medicine-related problems before they arise. The Activating pharmacists to reduce medication related problems ( ACTMed ) stepped wedge trial co-led by University of Queensland's Professor Lisa Nissen FPS and Dr Jean Spinks is set to launch across 42 Queensland-based primary care practices next month, following a successful 6-month pilot at three sites.

[Read More](#)

## NSW Premier to headline conference

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 16/08/2023

The Pharmacy Guild New South Wales Branch President, David Heffernan has announced that the Premier of New South Wales, Chris Minns will officially open this year's Pharmacy Connect conference in Sydney on Thu 31 Aug, (PD Breaking News yesterday). The Premier will officially open the Welcome Reception and address the hundreds of delegates registered to attend this year's event.

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## MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

### Concerns over possible telehealth indemnity gaps

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 16/08/2023

The RACGP has queried some insurers' policies towards exemptions to the established clinical relationship' requirement. Infants aged less than 12 months are among the groups who are exempted from the established clinical relationship' requirement.

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## BENEFITS INTEGRITY

### Townsville doctor Rene Zimmermann fined \$100,000 and found guilty of professional misconduct for inviting young patient on free holiday

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 16/08/2023, Vanda Carson

A Queensland doctor has been slapped with a \$10,000 fine and found guilty of professional misconduct for offering to take a vulnerable 23-year-old patient with him on a two-week interstate holiday. A Queensland doctor has been slapped with a \$10,000 fine and found guilty of professional misconduct for offering to take a vulnerable patient with him on a two-week interstate holiday.

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

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## GP referrals for cosmetic surgery – why they are low risk but challenging

Australian Doctor, Other, 16/08/2023, Daniel Spencer

GPs have raised concerns about their responsibilities following AHPRA's release of the Guidelines for Registered Medical Practitioners who Perform Cosmetic Surgery and Procedures, which came into effect on 1 July 2023. The changes follow an independent review in 2022 into patient safety issues in the cosmetic surgery industry, and include a new registration standard for cosmetic surgery endorsement to inform patients about doctors' training and qualifications.

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## HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

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## SPORT

### Olympic-sized fail amid cup glory

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 17/08/2023, Anthony Dennis, Page 27

Our staging of the Women's World Cup has been a triumph except we neglected to seize a massive tourism opportunity. One of my most cherished non-sporting memories of the 2000 Sydney Games was the night when five classically interlaced Olympic rings were illuminated on the Harbour Bridge for the duration of the biggest event ever held in Australia.

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

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### United behind the Matildas

Courier Mail, General News, 17/08/2023, Jeremy Pierce, Page 1

Millions of Australians gathered to support the Matildas last night, at Stadium Australia and at live sites across the nation, in scenes only rivalled by Cathy Freeman's iconic 400m gold medal at the 2000 Olympics.

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

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### Greens' bid to cancel Games

Courier Mail, General News, 17/08/2023, Stephanie Bennett & Taylah Fellows, Page 22

A Greens lord mayor would cancel the Brisbane Olympics, slug a vacancy levy on investment properties and advocate policies to lower house prices, candidate Jonathan Sriranganathan has declared. The controversial former councillor - a self-declared anarchist who infamously slammed Queensland Police as "racist" - hit the media circuit on Wednesday declaring his push for city hall.

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### Full time called by Adelaide veteran

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 17/08/2023, Will Hogan, Page 11

Long-kicking defender Paul Seedsman will not play football again after a concussion panel recommended he retire despite the Adelaide veteran still being desperate to pull on the boots. The

former Collingwood dasher announced his retirement on Wednesday, after not playing since round 23, 2021 due to concussion.

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## HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

### Australian find set to change stem cell therapy, research

Australian Financial Review, General News, 17/08/2023, Jill Margo, Page 8

Australian scientists have made a landmark discovery that is poised to change the way stem cells are made for research and treatment. Their discovery, described in the journal Nature, removes potential limitations that can result when ordinary human cells...

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

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### Pig-to-human transplant success

The Australian, General News, 17/08/2023, Elise Kaine, Page 7

One of the first functional kidney transplants from a pig to a human could provide a path to recovery for more than 15,000 Australians currently on kidney dialysis, according to new research from the University of Alabama. Genetically modified animal donor kidneys were transplanted into a brain-dead man and quickly performed normal kidney functions for a milestone seven days.

Also reported by: [The Australian \(Online\)](#).

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### Surprising cardio-metabolic benefits of breastfeeding revealed

Australian Pharmacist, Other, 16/08/2023, Chloe Hava

Lactation has important health benefits for both babies and mothers, but new research has discovered that breastfeeding improves women's cardiovascular health. Women were assessed 3 years after the birth of their babies. Those who breastfed for at least 6 months were found to have significantly lower systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure, mean arterial pressure, central systolic blood pressure, and central diastolic blood pressure than those who did not.

[Read More](#)

### West Wollongong parents B.J. and Heather So advance cancer cause

Illawarra Mercury, Other, 16/08/2023, Natalie Croxon

A West Wollongong couple continue to drive support for research into the incurable brain cancer that claimed their little girl's life, meeting with Health Minister Ryan Park to discuss what he can do to help. Dr B.J.

[Read More](#)

### Heart can predict cognitive decline decades earlier

Your Life Choices, Other, 17/08/2023, Brad Lockyer

A genetic predisposition for high blood pressure earlier in life may be a predictor of cognitive problems in older age. New research, conducted by the UNSW Sydney Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing (CHeBA), shows signs of cognitive decline can start appearing in people with a genetic risk of high blood pressure in their 50s, and sometimes even 40s.

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## OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

### **Parents urged to watch for scarlet fever symptoms as strep A cases surge in Queensland**

ABC Online, Other, 16/08/2023, Mia Knight

Parents are being warned to be on the lookout for fever and rash symptoms in young children as strep A infections sweep across Queensland. Townsville University Hospital clinical physician Nishila Moodley said group A streptococcus was a common bacteria that causes a range of conditions, such as scarlet fever and impetigo, also known as school sores.

[Read More](#)

### **Queenslanders at increased risk of Ross River virus**

9News, Other, 16/08/2023, Savannah Meacham

South East Queenslanders are facing an increased risk of exposure to a mosquito-borne virus that can cause months of discomfort. QIMR Berghofer researchers found humans are the preferred meal for mosquitos lingering in parks in the state's south-east and are more at risk of catching Ross River virus, also known as Ross River fever.

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### **Channel 9, National Nine News, 16/08/2023, Andrew Lofthouse and Melissa Downes**

Brisbane researchers have found southeast Queenslanders are at an increasing risk of mosquito borne diseases. Mozzie lab at the Ekka urging us to be more vigilant when it comes to protecting ourselves. Researchers from QIMR Berghofer mosquito control group have found people are the preferred target over animals after a study on mozzies caught by traps in Brackenridge, Corinda, Indooroopilly and Banyo. Alarmingly, further testing found more than 50% of people who use local parks have been exposed to Ross River virus.

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### **ABC Radio Brisbane, Mornings, 16/08/2023, Rebecca Levingston**

Interview with Gregor Devine, Head - Mosquito Control Laboratory, QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute. Devine discusses their findings that southeast Queensland is facing an increasing risk of exposure to Ross River virus which is spread by mosquitoes. He discusses methods to prevent the spread of the disease including increasing the ways to administer vaccines and mosquito repellants.

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## THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

### **Turmeric pills risk liver damage**

Daily Telegraph, General News, 17/08/2023, Duncan Evans, Page 20

Australia's medicines watchdog has put out a chilling warning to patients and consumers that two common ingredients in medicines and herbal supplements turmeric and curcumin could lead to liver injury and even death. The Therapeutic Goods Administration says turmeric and curcumin can cause injury in rare cases, releasing its verdict on Tuesday after receiving 18 reports of injuries up to June this year, including one instance of a fatality.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#).

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## Home test that checks if an abortion has worked reduces follow-up surgery, study finds

The Guardian, Other, 16/08/2023, Natasha May

A home test that checks whether a drug-induced abortion has worked is not only safe but reduces rates of unnecessary follow-up surgery, an Australian-first study has found. [...] The medical regulator, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), approved the urine test in November 2019, though it has been widely available in the UK for several years.

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## Shortage goes on

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 16/08/2023

Novo Nordisk Pharmaceuticals has notified the TGA about a critical shortage of the emergency glucagon product, GlucaGen HypoKit. The shortage, which is due to manufacturing delays, is expected to last until 30 Sep this year.

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## Channel 7, Sunrise, 16/08/2023, Natalie Barr and Matt Shirvington

The Therapeutic Goods Administration has reported more than 450 medicines are in short supply, with 47 listed as critical, and patients are being forced to shop around while pharmacists look for alternatives at the height of the flu season.

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## SBS, World News Australia, 16/08/2023, Janice Petersen

Cisplatin is credited as the drug that changed cancer treatment. 50 years ago, skyrocketing the cure rate of testicular cancer and also effective against lung, breast and ovarian cancers. In June, 70% of US cancer centres said they were short on the drug and 93% said they were short on the related drug carboplatin. In a statement to SBS, Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration says it has not been notified of any cisplatin shortages in Australia. It's been notified of two carboplatin medicine shortages which are expected to be resolved at the end of the month and early in September. In the meanwhile, an alternative is available.

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## OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

### Quest to quantify impact

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 16/08/2023

Australians living with one of 200 chronic conditions may now be eligible to participate in what may well become the world's largest study into the economic impact of medicinal cannabis treatments on health and quality of life for patients. The Global QUEST study, led by Curtin University and sponsored by ASX-listed medicinal cannabis supplier Little Green Pharma, will aim to assess whether medicinal cannabis reduces the economic impact of chronic disease, by reducing both the number of medications a patient requires and their need for healthcare services.

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## FOOD STANDARDS

## Warning on energy drink

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 17/08/2023, Adrienne Tam, Page 7

Medical experts have warned parents against shopping online for the highly-caffeinated drink Prime Energy for their children, saying it is "dangerous". Although the drink has been banned in Australia, it is advertised online on Australian and global distributors. [...] Strict regulations under regulatory body Food Standards Australia New Zealand state that energy drinks should not contain more than 32mg of caffeine per 100ml.

*Also reported by: [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#).*

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## Love Raw peanut butter cups recalled over fears of undeclared gluten allergen

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 16/08/2023, Blake Antrobus

Authorities have issued an urgent warning for people to return a popular snack sold at independent food retailers in four states. [...] Supplied In a statement, Food Standards Australia New Zealand said the recall was due to the presence of an undeclared gluten allergen.

*Also reported by: [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).*

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