



# TODAY'S NEWS

Thursday, 16th November 2023

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## LINKS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Courier Mail \(page 1\)](#)** reports that concerns have been raised over patient confusion with the treatment available at Queensland's new satellite hospitals, with over three hundred urgent care patients presenting to the medical centres since their opening in July.
- **[The Courier Mail \(page 1\)](#)** reports that immunocompromised patients at the Prince Charles and St Vincent's Private hospitals in Brisbane have been advised to wear a mask near a construction site thought to be the source of a deadly fungal outbreak.
- **[The Canberra Times \(page 3\)](#)** reports that NSW Health and the University of Newcastle are conducting a trial that will allow five pharmacists in the ACT to prescribe oral contraceptive pills to patients who have been on a low-risk oral contraceptive pill for the last two years.
- **[The Sydney Morning Herald \(page 5\)](#)** report that NSW chief health officer Dr Kerry Chant will attend a vaping summit in Parramatta today to discuss with parent groups, politicians and school leaders the growing rates of vaping in high schools.
- **[The Australian \(page 7\)](#)** reports that the federal Department of Health and Aged Care has reported an average of 1004 new Covid-19 cases a day as Australia faces a new Covid-19 wave, but state health officers report symptoms of the illness are becoming less severe.

- **[The Herald Sun \(page 9\)](#)** reports that an investigation into three Victorian hospitals by the Victorian Auditor's General Office has found the hospitals and the state health department have not done enough to protect healthcare workers' welfare, with employee wellbeing deteriorating since 2019.
- **[The Herald Sun \(page 13\)](#)** reports that Nubeqa, a groundbreaking treatment option for men with advanced prostate cancer, will be listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme from December 1. Health Minister Mark Butler stated the government is committed to providing the "best possible care and treatment" for people suffering from advanced prostate cancer at an affordable price.
- **[ABC Online](#)** reports that Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care has found that despite a significant drop in antibiotic prescription during the pandemic, drug-resistant infections continue to threaten Australians.

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## MINISTER BUTLER

### New help for dying men

Herald Sun, General News, 16/11/2023, Clare Armstrong, Page 13

Thousands of men fighting incurable advanced prostate cancer will gain affordable access to a life-changing new treatment to help extend their time with loved ones. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the Government was committed to giving the "best possible care and treatment" to people suffering from advanced prostate cancer.

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### Cheap access to new prostate cancer drug

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 16/11/2023, Clare Armstrong, Page 4

Thousands of Australian men fighting incurable advanced prostate cancer will gain affordable access to a life-changing new treatment to help extend their time with loved ones. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the government was committed to giving the "best possible care and treatment".

Also reported by: [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#).

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### Vow to take doc's plight to Minister

Ipswich Tribune, General News, 15/11/2023, Rob Mellett, Page 5

A federal pollie promises to support a local doctor in his struggle against government officialdom. Federal Member for Blair Shayne Neumann read recently about Magdy El Ashrey's dilemma in the Ipswich Tribune, and the Walloon Medical Centre GP's struggle to attract doctors to work long-term at his surgery. [...] Mr Neumann said he would raise Dr Ashrey's case with Federal Health Minister Mark Butler.

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### 'The only way you will be able to legally get a vape in this country is through a pharmacy': Mark Butler, Minister for Health

ABC Online, Other, 15/11/2023, James-Valentine

Last week, the Australian Border Force announced that they'd intercepted some 35 tonnes of vaping products that were all suspected to contain nicotine. The Minister for Health Mark Butler spoke with ABC Radio Sydney Breakfast's James Valentine about the next steps to stop the illegal sale of vapes in Australia.

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### Calls for more Pet-Friendly Aged Care options in Australia

Australian Dog Lover, Other, 15/11/2023

National animal welfare charity Companion Animal Network Australia (Australia CAN or CANA) is calling for urgent support for older pet owners at home, as the Australian Government is working to

prioritise independence and restore the dignity of older people in Australia in a \$18.3 billion reform package [...] "We are calling Hon Mark Butler MP, Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care and Hon Anika Wells MP, Federal Minister for Aged Care to help our ageing population maintain a high quality of life and that includes finding ways to help older adults retain their pets."

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## Evidence shows benefits of 60-day dispensing: Butler

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 15/11/2023, Bruce Hua

Despite disagreements between pharmacists and the government, double dispensing is delivering savings for patients, while "maintaining a strong and vibrant pharmacy sector", Mark Butler, the Minister for Health and Aged Care says. Addressing the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's annual dinner.

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## Son crusades for drug warning

Berwick Star News, Other, 15/11/2023, Jin-Hui

An osteoporosis drug's warning label may be tightened after a Dandenong man's sustained campaign to the Federal Government. [...] In a letter in late 2022, Health Minister Mark Butler stated he'd been advised that the Australian PI gave an "accurate" and "balanced" description of relevant trial results.

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## For those who follow history, the glass of health reform is at least half-full

Croakey, Other, 15/11/2023, Melissa Sweet

If you haven't already, it's worth making time to read Health and Aged Care Minister Mark Butler's recent speech to a Whitlam Institute event celebrating the history of the Community Health Program. The program, launched in 1973, supported locally-driven, community-controlled, multidisciplinary community health services that addressed the social determinants of health and provided treatment programs and health promotion in areas like drug and alcohol, mental health and reproductive health.

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## Australia's Vape Laws will be the 'Toughest in the World'

Mum Central, Other, 15/11/2023, Tina Evans

It's no secret that vapes are wreaking havoc in schools across Australia. More than 3.5 million Australians aged 14 and older smoke or vape according to June research released by Cancer Victoria. [...] Strict vape laws to come Health Minister Mark Butler announced today that a new scheme phased in from January 2024 aims to stop vapes from coming into Australia and our schools.

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## Health Minister reveals how urgent care clinics have been benefiting Australians

NEWS.com.au, Other, 15/11/2023

Health Minister Mark Butler explained during Question Time on Wednesday how the 38 urgent care clinics in Australia have benefited people across the country. Mr Butler went on to announce another 20 more clinics will be open by the end of the year.

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

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## Calls for government support for older pet owners

Pet Industry News, Other, 15/11/2023

Companion Animal Network Australia (CANA) is calling for the government to increase the number of pet-friendly aged care support services. [...] "We are calling Hon Mark Butler MP, Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care and Hon Anika Wells MP, Federal Minister for Aged Care to help our ageing population maintain a high quality of life and that includes finding ways to help older adults retain their pets."

## Tough talk on vapes

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 15/11/2023

The Australian Border Force intercepting some 35 tonnes of vaping products, all suspected to largely contain nicotine, has raised the ire of Federal Health Minister Mark Butler, who said on ABC Radio yesterday that the Govt is prepared to introduce some of the toughest laws in the world.

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## Guild, Govt at the same table for 8CPA

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 15/11/2023

The Federal Govt and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia are back at the table to negotiate and sign off on the 8th Community Pharmacy Agreement by 01 Mar 2024, the Guild National President Trent Twomey told a packed audience at its Annual Parliamentary Dinner in Canberra last night. Welcoming the Federal Health Minister Mark Butler (pictured right) in what was seen as a clear reconciliation after the acrimonious fallout post the introduction of 60-Day Dispensing, Twomey (pictured left) said, "after our public disagreements, we both want the same thing, a CPA implemented by 01 Mar 2024, a thriving and sustainable community pharmacy industry that can get back to carefully looking after their patients instead of looking over their shoulder and worrying about the viability of their profession".

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## Payroll tax to eat up bulk billing incentives

The Medical Republic, Other, 15/11/2023

It seems Queensland is the teacher's pet where payroll tax is concerned. The federal health minister has echoed RACGP fears that payroll tax may eat up recent investments into bulk billing incentives, encouraging states to prioritise national consistency and follow in Queensland's footsteps.

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## Channel 10, 10 News First, 15/11/2023, Sandra Sully

There are concerns taxpayers could be hit with bigger health bills unless the GP shortage is addressed. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' Health of the Nation report reveals that almost a third of Australia's general practitioners are planning on leaving the job altogether over the next few years. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says it is another reminder of the parlous state of general practice after ten years of cuts and neglect of Medicare. Butler adds in the May Budget, they delivered on that promise with more than \$6b in new initiatives in Medicare, including the tripling of the bulk billing incentive for general practice consults that took effect only two weeks ago.

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## 5AA, Mornings, 15/11/2023, Matthew Pantelis

Interview with Dr Nicole Higgins, President, Royal Australian College of GPs, on doctors saying they're at breaking point as the affordability of primary care deteriorates. One-third of doctors are considering quitting the profession in the next five years. Higgins says they hope Health Minister Mark Butler will make sure to put funding back into general practice, look after young doctors, and enable those doctors who are coming in from other countries who want to work in regional rural Australia. She adds the Government also needs to look at increasing Medicare rebates for patients who are spending longer time with their GPs.

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## ABC Radio Canberra, AM, 15/11/2023, Sabra Lane

Report on GPs saying they're seeing more patients than ever and spending more time with them, but the doctors themselves aren't doing so well, with a third planning to retire in the next five years. A new report is warning doctors are becoming burnt-out, demoralised and fearful for the future of their profession. It's also discouraging medical students from becoming GPs. In a statement, Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says the Government knows not enough medical graduates are choosing general practice and that it's delivering sustained investment to strengthen Medicare, including a \$1.5b indexation boost to Medicare payments.

## ABC Radio Sydney, 09:00 News, 15/11/2023

A demonstration outside Parliament House in Canberra today will aim to raise awareness of the hidden toll of brain cancer in Australia. Brain Tumour Alliance Australia Chair Craig Cardinal says survival rates haven't increased in 30 years and remain in the low 20% range. Attendees will also present a portfolio of impact statements from patients and carers to Federal Health Minister Mark Butler.

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## MINISTER WELLS

### 'Mask up' calls amid spread of Australia's new Covid wave

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 16/11/2023, Madeleine Achenza, Page 5

An infectious diseases expert has urged Australians to wear masks as a new Covid wave prompts two states to consider reintroducing the contentious health measure. [...] Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells told Today that people understood they needed to adapt to the "new reality".

Also reported by: [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Weekly Times Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Perth Now \(Online\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#), [Sky News Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#).

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### Calls for more Pet-Friendly Aged Care options in Australia

Australian Dog Lover, Other, 15/11/2023

National animal welfare charity Companion Animal Network Australia (Australia CAN or CANA) is calling for urgent support for older pet owners at home, as the Australian Government is working to prioritise independence and restore the dignity of older people in Australia in a \$18.3 billion reform package [...] "We are calling Hon Mark Butler MP, Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care and Hon Anika Wells MP, Federal Minister for Aged Care to help our ageing population maintain a high quality of life and that includes finding ways to help older adults retain their pets."

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### ACT government calls meeting to help develop AIS revamp vision

Canberra Times, Other, 15/11/2023, Chris Dutton

ACT Sport Minister Yvette Berry has urged sports, businesses and community groups to be bold about the future of AIS after rallying key stakeholders to help shape a common vision for the Bruce campus. [...] Submissions to the review close on November 21, with a report to be presented to federal Infrastructure Minister Catherine King and Sport Minister Anika Wells by the end of the year.

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### Grant applications open for rural service providers

Community Care Review, Other, 15/11/2023

Specialist aged care providers operating in rural and remote areas of the country are to receive \$135 million in infrastructure grants, the federal government has announced. [...] The investment will "help maintain or improve access to quality aged care services where they are needed most," said Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells in a statement.

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### Football fever inspires ANU's word of the year

Northern Territory News, Other, 15/11/2023, Anthony Anderson

The Matildas' popularity has soared because of the FIFA Women's World Cup and the team now has another unusual accolade. [...] Federal Sport Minister Anika Wells speaks as Matildas fans gather to show their support at a community reception in Brisbane.

## Calls for government support for older pet owners

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## National design competition challenges architects to transform residential aged care homes

The Property Tribune, Other, 15/11/2023, Thierry Ng

National design competition aims to improve aged care homes for older adults. Architects invited to submit proposals for urban and regional development scenarios. [...] Minister for Aged Care, Anika Wells, will announce the winners by the end of April 2024.

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## 'Not good enough': Warning as Covid spikes

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 15/11/2023

An infectious disease expert has urged Australians to wear masks as a new Covid wave prompts two states to consider reintroducing the unpopular measure. [...] Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells told Today on Wednesday morning that Queenslanders understood they needed to adapt to the "new reality".

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## 3AW, 08:00 News, 15/11/2023

Health experts say more than half of aged care residents are no longer fully vaccinated against COVID, as more than 300 nursing homes are facing the virus outbreak. Slow vaccine rollout is being blamed for the said outbreak. Federal Aged Care Minister Anika Wells reminded visitors at aged care facilities this holiday season to be vaccinated against the virus.

[Play Now](#)[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

---

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[Back to Top](#)

---

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[Back to Top](#)

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## No Covid curbs as hospital rates soar

The Australian, General News, 16/11/2023, Mohammad Alfares, Page 7

Australia is riding another wave of Covid-19, but symptoms of the illness are becoming less severe and new restrictions would be "disproportionate," Queensland's chief health officer says. [...] There were 7034 new cases of Covid-19 reported across the country in the last week, with the federal Department of Health and Aged Care confirming a reported average of 1004 cases a day.

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

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## Leading COVID expert reveals why infections are surging in Australia before Christmas

7news.com.au, Other, 15/11/2023, Bryce Luff

A leading epidemiologist has identified two factors driving the surge in Australia's coronavirus numbers and revealed what she believes will help push the country over its latest COVID wave, the country's eighth, by Christmas. [...] "While COVID-19 remains a serious threat to the health of Australians, and requires ongoing vigilance by the public and governments, state and territory health systems are well placed to manage the virus alongside other infectious diseases," the Department of Health and Aged Care said.

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## Input wanted on sector's digital strategy

Community Care Review, Other, 15/11/2023, Christopher Kelly

The use of technology in the aged care sector has expanded dramatically, however, this has created a fragmentation of the digital systems used within the industry, according to a government document. [...] The 48-page draft document authored by the Department of Health and Aged Care, the Australian Digital Health Agency, and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare aims to encourage the innovative use of digital technologies in the aged care sector.

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## Wide-ranging benefits from integrating pharmacists into Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations

Croakey, Other, 15/11/2023, Melissa Sweet

Integrating pharmacists into Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) brings many benefits for patients with chronic diseases, according to Associate Professor Sophia Couzos, a public health physician with the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council. [...] Sophia Couzos writes: In March 2023, an arm of the Department of Health and Aged Care quietly made a major announcement about a brighter future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with chronic disease.

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## Building better care and support systems for people with ADHD: what will it take?

Croakey, Other, 15/11/2023, Melissa Sweet

A Senate inquiry has made wide-ranging recommendations to improve healthcare and support for people with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); these can be read in a summary version here. [...] The report also urges the Australian Government to develop a dedicated ADHD information portal, and recommends the Department of Health and Aged Care implement a neurodiversity-affirming public health campaign to shift social attitudes and stigma associated with ADHD, and to improve public awareness and promote education.

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## Ovation of the Seas cruise ship passengers slugged \$235 for a Covid test

A cruise company is charging passengers an eye-watering 'consultation fee' if they return a negative test at an onboard medical centre after falling ill on one of their ships. [...] There were 6,550 reported Covid cases across Australia last week, with the Department of Health and Aged Care confirming an average of 936 new cases per day.

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## **Applications open for Birthing on Country scholarships to support Indigenous midwifery students**

National Indigenous Times, Other, 15/11/2023, Giovanni Torre

First Nations midwifery students and graduates are being encouraged to apply for a range of Southern Cross University scholarships and bursaries totalling \$60,000. [...] The scholarship and bursary are funded by a \$3.5 million Birthing on Country/iSISTAQUIT grant provided to Southern Cross University by the federal Department of Health and Aged Care with the aim to improve Indigenous midwifery services.

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## **From COVID to gastro, why are cruise ships such hotbeds of infection?**

New Daily, Other, 15/11/2023

A spokesperson for Princess Cruises, which operates the ship, said a number of passengers had presented with symptoms on a previous voyage. But the ship has since been disinfected and the number of people who were ill when the ship arrived into Adelaide was said to be in single digits. [...] The Department of Health and Aged Care recommends cruise companies encourage crew and passengers to be up-to-date with flu and COVID vaccinations, and encourage anyone who becomes ill to stay in their cabin, or at least avoid crowded spaces and wear a mask in public.

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## **eRx or paper scripts: doctor's choice**

The Medical Republic, Other, 15/11/2023

FredIT now runs the show but Medisecure is not quite out of the game just yet. At 9pm on Tuesday, eRx became the monopoly for Australia's ePrescription services but Medisecure is not yet completely out of the game. Although eRx has become the sole provider of e-prescribing services nationally, Medisecure is still contracted by the Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC) to provide "selective prescription exchange technology services to support eRx".

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## **Perinatal Mental Health Week shines light on challenges for regional and remote families**

The Northern Rivers Times, Other, 15/11/2023

This Perinatal Mental Health Week (12-18 November), parenting experts at the Triple P Positive Parenting Program are shining a light on giving babies the best start in life by improving the mental health and wellbeing of new parents and carers in regional and remote areas. [...] Delivery of the Triple P Positive Parenting Program to parents and carers of children in Australia is supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care under the Parenting Education and Support Program.

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The Property Tribune, Other, 15/11/2023, Thierry Ng

National design competition aims to improve aged care homes for older adults. Architects invited to submit proposals for urban and regional development scenarios. [...] Minister for Aged Care, Anika Wells, will announce the winners by the end of April 2024.

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[Back to Top](#)



# CORONAVIRUS

## Boosters urged as Covid surges

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 16/11/2023, Brad Crouch, Page 10

Soaring Covid numbers are likely to continue as the state faces a "double whammy" of waning immunity and highly transmissible mutations of the virus, an expert warns. Professor of Biostatistics at UniSA Adrian Esterman urged vulnerable people over 65, or with health issues such as diabetes to wear good quality face masks at places like supermarkets and public transport.

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## COVID cases are rising in WA, and experts warn the virus is still a force to be reckoned with

ABC Online, Other, 15/11/2023, James Carmody

In recent weeks COVID-19 has notably re-emerged on the radar for West Australians. The community is talking about the virus again, and for some it could be cause for concern.

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## Qld braces for COVID cases as infection wave lifts

Canberra Times, Other, 15/11/2023, Fraser Barton

Queensland's chief health officer won't recommend wearing masks in public despite a surge in COVID-19 cases, as an eighth wave of the virus sweeps across Australia. John Gerrard said the health department must not overstate the risk of the COVID-19 wave due to high vaccination rates and a general level of immunity, but implored those aged 65 and over to receive a booster jab.

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## AMA Queensland president Maria Boulton calls for Australians to wear masks as latest Covid wave strikes the country

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 15/11/2023, Olivia Day

Australian Medical Association Queensland president Maria Boulton says people should opt to wear masks in public places such as large crowds, planes and medical settings to slow the spread of Covid before is currently in its fourth week of the latest Covid wave to strike Australia with 122 people currently hospitalised with the virus - up from 74 people last month.

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## Channel 10, 10 News First, 15/11/2023, Sandra Sully

Queensland Chief Health Officer John Gerrard says that COVID waves are getting milder as the state's eighth outbreak intensifies. Two people are now fighting for life and hundreds of people have in fact been infected by two new variants. Doctors say masks should be worn in crowds and all healthcare facilities.

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## Channel 7, Seven News, 15/11/2023, Mark Ferguson

The pandemic rush to get vaccines into nursing homes seems long forgotten tonight, with new data showing just a third of residents are now up to date with their boosters. But Sydney chemists are reporting renewed interest in the shots as an eighth COVID wave takes hold. The new wave is showing up in ICUs around the country with COVID admissions again on the rise while some hospitals in SA have returned to mandatory masks.

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[Back to Top](#)

## Antibiotic overuse

Northern Territory News, General News, 16/11/2023, Page 16

Australians are unwittingly being exposed to increased risk of harm from taking antibiotics that will have no or little benefit in treating common infections. The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care says Australia ranks among the highest in the developed world for antimicrobial use.

Also reported by: [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#)

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## IRT posts loss after 'challenging' year

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 16/11/2023, Connor Pearce, Page 10

The annual reports of the largest aged care providers in the Illawarra demonstrate the mixed fortunes of the sector in the Illawarra, after years of scandals and closures across aged care centres, however one of the region's largest aged care providers posted a nearly \$5 million loss this year. The aged care sector was one of the hardest hit by the COVID pandemic, and has been grappling with an increasingly challenging business model as costs mount and the most high need patients remain in care.

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## Australia 'losing the war' against drug-resistant infection, despite drop in use of antibiotics

ABC Online, Other, 16/11/2023, Emily Laurence

A national report has found COVID caused one of the biggest drops in antibiotic use in Australia in decades, but fears remain the country is "losing the war" against drug-resistant infection. While the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care's report found community antibiotic use had fallen 19 per cent since 2019, the country was one of the highest users in the world.

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## CPR not given to an aged care resident because of a misunderstanding, coroner finds

ABC Online, Other, 15/11/2023, Isabella Podwinski

The coroner recommended the centre improve staffing levels to ensure residents are attended to. A man who died from a heart attack on the floor of his room at a residential aged care home in north-west Tasmania was not given CPR because staff mistakenly believed he had an active "do not resuscitate" order, a coroner has found.

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## Resident's family take legal action against home, provider points to media misrepresentation

HelloCare, Other, 15/11/2023, Bianca Iovino

A Queensland woman plans to take legal action against her father's aged care facility after they allegedly failed to manage his pain medication while he was dying from pancreatic cancer, but the provider has said the media has misrepresented the facts. Kim Sutton took the story of her 86-year-old father John Currie to A Current Affair where she alleged he endured "a horrific, terrible passing" at Lutheran Services' Northridge Salem Aged Care facility in August 2022.

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## Australia's overuse of antibiotics found to be driving rate of drug-resistant infections

The Guardian, Other, 16/11/2023, Melissa Davey

Australia's continued overuse of antibiotics is driving common and potentially dangerous infections to become increasingly resistant to drugs, including last resort treatments. A major government report on antimicrobial use, published on Wednesday, found more than one-third (36.6%) of the population had at least one antimicrobial prescription subsidised by the Australian government in 2022, up from 32.9% in 2021.

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## POPULATION HEALTH

### Teens 'want help to stop vaping'

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 16/11/2023, Christopher Harris, Page 5

Young people hooked on vapes dislike how it controls their lives and want help to stop, NSW chief health officer Dr Kerry Chant has said. Chant will join parent groups, politicians and school leaders today for a vaping summit in Parramatta to discuss the scourge of e-cigarettes which has run rife in high schools.

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### Trial to allow pharmacies to prescribe contraceptive pill

Canberra Times, General News, 16/11/2023, Lanie Tindale, Page 3

Five pharmacists in the ACT will be able to prescribe oral contraceptive pills to some Canberrans in an "exciting" new trial. Ordinarily, patients must have an appointment with their general practitioner each time their medication runs out.

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### Tracking meth users

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 15/11/2023, Allan Murphy, Page 1

Researchers will follow drug users in the Mildura region over five years to seek crucial answers about drug-related harms and how to prevent them. Monash Rural Health Associate Professor Bernadette Ward said the study would go a long way to help shape services to meet people where they are at.

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### New study beds down good sleeping habits

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 16/11/2023, Robyn Riley, Page 4

For the first time a new Victorian-led study has pinpointed the ideal time adults should sleep for good health. Seven hours is optimal, according to the Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute.

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### Australia's 'silent killer' set to claim thousands of lives - with Western Sydney at risk

NEWS.com.au, Other, 15/11/2023, Shannon Molloy

It's been dubbed the nation's silent killer' because it takes hundreds of lives each year but isn't discussed but soon, experts warn it'll be inescapable. The number of people who die from heat-related deaths, dubbed society's "silent killer", is projected to surge over coming decades, with millions living in so-called heat islands' like Western Sydney.

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

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### Teen binge drinking rate down ahead of schoolies events

Canberra Times, Other, 15/11/2023, Rex Martinich

Binge drinking among 14 to 24-year-olds has decreased by 15 per cent over the past 12 months, according to a report into alcohol, tobacco and drug use by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. The proportion of people in that age group abstaining from alcohol has risen to 21 per cent, which is now greater than the percentage of young people engaging in persistent consumption of alcohol at levels that present life-long risks.

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### Schoolies week 2023: Qld school leavers opting for less alcohol

Binge-drinking at Schoolies has plummeted as more health-conscious teens reduce alcohol consumption to make memories at the annual "rite of passage" celebration that they can actually remember, experts say. As tens of thousands of Queensland school-leavers prepare to hit the Gold Coast this weekend, paramedics and organisations such as Red Frogs and DrinkWise say there's been a dramatic decline in drinking at the once booze-soaked event. Young people have been leading a sobriety revolution in Australia, with latest figures from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare showing the number of young adults abstaining from alcohol has doubled.

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## Vasectomies soaring, tube tying falling, Medicare data reveals

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 15/11/2023, Brad Crouch

Vasectomies soared by 75 per cent in the past decade to hit 38,875 last financial year while women having their tubes tied plummeted by 50 per cent to 5462, national Medicare data reveals. The combined South Australia and Northern Territory figures lagged a little behind the national average with the number of vasectomies rising 55 per cent, from 1491 in 2013-14 to 2312 in 2022-23, while tubal ligation fell 38 per cent from 669 to 413.

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

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## Head injuries in Australia rise nearly 7% after Covid dip, new report finds

The Guardian, Other, 16/11/2023, Natasha May

Every four minutes an Australian is hospitalised with a head injury, with cases rising nearly 7% after dropping during Covid-19 lockdowns and disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable Australians, new data shows. A report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) published on Thursday has found in 2020-21, head injuries accounted for more than one in five of all injury emergency department presentations.

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[Back to Top](#)

## CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

### Cancer test fund boost

Herald Sun, General News, 16/11/2023, Robyn Riley, Page 11

Melbourne researchers are hoping a funding injection to be announced on Thursday can lead to the world's first early detection blood test for pancreatic cancer. One of Australia's biggest cancer killers, it is labelled the silent cancer because there are few distinct symptoms and limited screening options which means the disease is often diagnosed at an advanced stage.

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

### Sound foundation for free insulin

West Australian, General News, 16/11/2023, Page 9

Children with type 1 diabetes are going without a lifesaving medical device because it is too expensive, but a Perth study is hoping to change this. Automated insulin delivery via the hybrid closed loop (HCL) pump is recognised as the most effective method to improve diabetes management, but it can cost up to \$10,000 a year.

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

### Secret signs of a merciless cancer

Gold Coast Bulletin, General News, 16/11/2023, Keith Woods, Page 2

Former Currumbin MP Jann Stuckey is calling on people to be on guard for the symptoms of a killer disease that almost claimed her life. Ms Stuckey was diagnosed in July last year with pancreatic

cancer, undergoing "brutal" chemotherapy and a major eight-hour surgery before being given the all-clear.

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

## Blowing up cancer

Newcastle Herald, General News, 16/11/2023, Madeline Link, Page 1

Newcastle researchers will use a share of \$1.8 million in grant funding to tackle a disease with one of the lowest survival rates - pancreatic cancer. University of Newcastle researcher Robert Chapman is developing a non-toxic chemotherapeutic drug without the usual side effects.

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

## Cleaner cars could be a real life saver

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 16/11/2023, Page 11

Australia's peak body on climate and health has called for cleaner, healthier vehicles to save lives from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). COPD is a preventable and treatable disease that causes breathlessness, chronic sputum production and a cough.

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## Renal patient Robyn Nead faces heartbreak of dialysis 900km from her Mount Isa home and family

ABC Online, Other, 15/11/2023, Julia André

When Robyn Nead isn't strapped to a chair receiving life-saving dialysis treatment, she wanders around a strange city hundreds of kilometres away from family and friends. The Indigenous Mount Isa resident is on the North West Hospital and Health Service's (NWHHS) waiting list to access dialysis treatment back home.

[Read More](#)

## Partnership to boost oral cancer early detection

Bite Magazine, Other, 15/11/2023

Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV) has partnered with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners to ensure general practitioners across Australia have the tools they need to detect oral cancer early and save lives. A national online learning resource has been launched on the RACGP website to empower its members to identify individuals at risk of oral cancer, detect the disease earlier through screening and have important prevention conversations with patients. [...] Content was developed in consultation with experts at DHSV, RACGP, University of Melbourne, Cancer Council Victoria, the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre and the Victorian Department of Health.

[Read More](#)

## \$10m boost to help Aussie kids with cancer

Gold Coast Bulletin, Other, 15/11/2023, Emma Cam

A new research program could be the key to discovering "less invasive" treatments in childhood cancers. News Corp Australia Network 0 comments A US TikTok mum shares her toddler's brave fight after the little girl was diagnosed with stage 4 rhabdomyosarcoma.

Also reported by: [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#).

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[Back to Top](#)

## PRIMARY CARE

### Confusion could cost lives

Courier Mail, General News, 16/11/2023, Hayden Johnson, Page 1

Hundreds of patients needing lifesaving medical treatment within minutes have been wrongly turning up to the state government's satellite hospitals - fuelling fears that labelling the medical centres

"hospitals" could be putting people at risk. [...] Australian Medical Association Queensland President Maria Boulton acknowledged while the 'hospital' name "may be confusing", the services inside were more important.

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

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

## Construction link to deadly fungus

Courier Mail, General News, 16/11/2023, Brendan O'Malley and Madura McCormack, Page 1

Vulnerable patients have been warned to wear masks near a construction site at The Prince Charles Hospital in Brisbane's north, after it was identified as the likely source of a deadly fungal outbreak. Infectious diseases experts yesterday urgently warned transplant or cancer patients to wear masks as soon as they got out of their cars for consultations or treatment.

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

## Almost a third of GPs plan to retire in five years

Canberra Times, General News, 16/11/2023, Page 6

Almost a third of GPs plan to retire in the next five years, prompting a call from their professional body to boost doctor numbers in the community. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners has released its 7th annual Health of the Nation report, which focuses on the attraction and retention of the GP workforce.

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

## Looming GP drought as doctors call it quits

Northern Territory News, General News, 16/11/2023, Fergus Ellis, Page 7

Australia faces a severe shortage of general practitioners, as nearly one-third of the profession has signalled they will retire within the next five years. [...] RACGP president Nicole Higgins echoed the report's findings, saying the general practice workforce needed a boost to ensure the needs of Australians were met now and into the future.

Also reported by: [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#).

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

## Third of GPs to retire within five years

West Australian, General News, 16/11/2023, Page 7

Almost a third of GPs plan to retire in the next five years, prompting a call from their professional body to boost doctor numbers in the community. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners has released its 7th annual Health of the Nation report, which focuses on attracting and retaining the GP workforce.

Also reported by: [Border Mail \(Albury-Wodonga\)](#), [Burnie Advocate \(Burnie\)](#), [Launceston Examiner \(Launceston\)](#).

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

## Paramedics speechless after two-hour VHF radio outage

Ballarat Courier, General News, 16/11/2023, Gabrielle Hodson, Page 8

The Victorian Ambulance Union wants metropolitan-style digital radio rolled out across regional Victoria, after an outage knocked out VHF communications across Ballarat and beyond. Between 12.30pm and 2.30pm on Monday, paramedics in the Grampians region were without twoway radios.

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

## Birth of a new era for unit

Cairns Post, General News, 16/11/2023, Sandhya Ram, Page 9

Cairns Hospital's new maternity assessment unit, designed to ease the workload of the hospital's birthing suites, welcomed its first few patients on Tuesday. The \$1m fast-tracked project brings six new assessment rooms to the unit - four in one suite and two private rooms for more intimate examinations or private discussions.

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## Paramedics, lifeguards team up to better skills

Daily Advertiser, General News, 16/11/2023, Taylor Dodge, Page 3

While you might have completed your CPR training, tending to a real-life cardiac arrest is no easy feat and can be confronting and daunting for many. To ensure the lifeguards at the Oasis Regional Aquatic Centre are confident in addressing an emergency situation, Wagga paramedics joined with lifeguards for a training day at the centre on Tuesday.

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

## Health hub start bumped

Kalgoorlie Miner, General News, 16/11/2023, Amber Lilley, Page 1

Construction of a new Laverton Hospital is not expected to begin until "mid-to-late 2024", according to a State Government request for information document, despite it being first funded more than eight years ago. It comes after concerns were raised about the status of the new health hub, which had been billed to be completed by the end of this year.

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## NQ hospital to get vital new scanner

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 16/11/2023, Cameron Bates, Page 11

A North Queensland hospital is finally receiving a long-awaited piece of medical equipment. Health Minister Shannon Fentiman has confirmed that Ingham Hospital will receive a vital new CT scanner to be operated by Queensland Health medical professionals.

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## Almost a third of all GPs 'intend to retire' in the next five years

9News, Other, 15/11/2023

A new report released by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) found that almost three in 10 GPs signalled their intention to retire in the next five years. The primary reasons cited by doctors were intense workloads, burnout and the increasing complexity of patients seeing general practitioners.

[Read More](#)

## Most GPs would not recommend the specialty to students or junior doctors: RACGP survey

Australian Doctor, Other, 15/11/2023, Heather Saxena

GPs with greater job satisfaction included those on salaries. GPs' job satisfaction is falling, and fewer than half would recommend general practice as a specialty, according to the RACGP's latest Health of the Nation report.

[Read More](#)

## Optus outage exposes an emerging legal risk for GPs

Australian Doctor, Other, 15/11/2023, Samantha Pillay

Last week's prolonged Optus system outage caused widespread disruption to the delivery of healthcare services. In some instances, this unprecedented network failure had the potential to result in adverse outcomes for patients who were unable to access the immediate or specialist medical care they needed. [...] This could include complying with any new government requirements or guidelines issued by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

[Read More](#)

## Car park build probed as source of fungus cluster

Canberra Times, Other, 15/11/2023, Fraser Barton

Health authorities will investigate whether a fungal cluster at a Brisbane hospital that left five people with infections was caused by construction of a nearby car park. Queensland Chief Health Officer John Gerrard said building work could stir up fungal spores and the Prince Charles Hospital's car park was part of early investigations.

[Read More](#)

## Oasis Medical Centre Broadbeach to close its doors in December after costs push it to insolvency

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 15/11/2023, Kathleen Skene

Patients of a popular beachside medical centre will be forced to find another clinic as rising costs push the small business to close its doors. Oasis Medical Centre in Broadbeach informed patients via text message that it would "be made insolvent" from December 22.

[Read More](#)

## Severe GP shortages expected within 5 years

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 15/11/2023

Australia faces a severe shortage of general practitioners, as nearly one-third of the profession has signalled they will retire within the next five years. [...] RACGP president Nicole Higgins echoed the report's findings, adding the general practice workforce needed a boost to ensure the needs of Australians were met now and into the future.

[Read More](#)

## Aussies paying \$10 more to visit the doctor

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 15/11/2023, Tamika Seeto

The cost of visiting the doctor has increased by \$10 in the past 12 months, as the number of GPs bulk-billing patients dwindles. [...] RACGP resident Dr Nicole Higgins said urgent action was needed to boost the GP workforce across Australia.

[Read More](#)

## Channel 10, 10 News First, 15/11/2023, Kate Freebairn

More ambulance interns are being thrown onto the front line to help ease the strain on the health system driven by COVID-19. Hospitals have recorded multiple Code Whites this week, with some patients forced to wait up to ten hours to secure a bed.

[Play Now](#)

## Channel 7, Sunrise, 15/11/2023, Natalie Barr and Matt Shirvington

Interview with Dr Paul Griffin, infectious diseases physician, on the Australian Medical Association urging people to bring back masks when they're flying or at Christmas parties. AMA president Dr Maria Boulton has slammed the lack of information being given to the public over the latest surge in COVID-19 cases. Griffin says it's clear there is no need for rules and mandates around masks at the moment, but they should be encouraging and facilitating mask-wearing as much as possible, particularly in high-risk settings and settings.

[Play Now](#)

## Channel 9, National Nine News, 15/11/2023, Peter Overton

Paramedics are always there in times of need, but unless they get a pay rise, they might not be. It is the warning from the Health Services Union tonight, which claims it may need to take drastic measures to have its demands heard. Next month, 1500 paramedics will refuse to sign up for professional registration and it means they won't be able to perform complex specialised procedures. NSW has already lost 600 paramedics, all lured interstate.

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## Channel 9, Today, 15/11/2023, Karl Stefanovic, Sarah Abo, Alex Cullen, and Jayne Azzopardi

Doctors are the latest to admit their prices are rising to cover the cost of living. The cost of an average GP appointment has jumped from \$64 to \$75 in the past 12 months and the number of doctors who say they bulk bill all their patients has slumped from 24% to just 12%. The data from the Royal



Australian College of General Practitioners was collected before the government introduced crash incentive cash incentives rather for GPs to bulk bill vulnerable patients.

[Play Now](#)

## Sky News Live, AM Agenda, 15/11/2023, Laura Jayes

Qld AMA President Maria Boulton has hit out at Qld Health for not having enough communication from authorities on the latest COVID-19 wave. The AMA would like to see the Chief Health Officer addressing the community regularly and guiding them on how they can avoid another disastrous, Christmas. A rough date for when these cases will peak is still very much unclear, but the Qld Chief Health Officer says it is likely to occur before Christmas.

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[Back to Top](#)

## MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

### More must be done to stop our men dying

Daily Telegraph, General News, 16/11/2023, Bettina Arndt, Page 23

Australia's suicide prevention policies are failing. We are falling behind the rest of the world when it comes to suicide prevention.

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[Back to Top](#)

## CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

### Homebirths are becoming more popular, with some women choosing them after a traumatic hospital birth

ABC Online, Other, 15/11/2023, Dubravka Voloder

Midwife Dayna Jangles still remembers the bright lights when thinking back to her first birth in a hospital after an uncomplicated pregnancy. "I kind of went into that experience a little bit blindly, hoping for the best and expecting that the care providers would make decisions that were in my best interest, which I now understand was actually quite naive," the 34-year-old told the ABC.

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[Back to Top](#)

## HEALTH WORKFORCE

### Health department slammed by watchdog

Herald Sun, General News, 16/11/2023, Sarah Booth, Page 9

The state's watchdog has slammed the health department and three Victorian hospitals for failing to protect healthcare workers' welfare as mental injury claims skyrocket. A damning report into employee health and wellbeing in Victorian public hospitals found it had "deteriorated" since 2019 and the department did not have effective oversight on whether hospitals are protecting their staff.

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

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### Merimbula GP Dr Corin Miller recognised as the Rural Health Professional of the Year

ABC Online, Other, 15/11/2023, Adriane Reardon

A GP based on the NSW far south coast has been awarded the Rural and Remote Health Professional

of the Year in Canberra as part of her work in leading a new model of care in Eden. The awards recognised health professionals across the country who had significantly contributed to improving healthcare in the regions.

[Read More](#)

## Paramedics issue new high stakes threat over pay deal

The New Daily, Other, 15/11/2023, Luke Costin

Paramedics angry over rising expectations and sluggish pay are threatening to take the nuclear option' by refusing to renew their registrations, making it illegal for them to work. The novel industrial action comes as Health Minister Ryan Park on Wednesday unveiled a trial embedding ECMO cardiac bypass machines in ambulances.

[Read More](#)

## ABC Radio Sydney, Breakfast, 15/11/2023, James Valentine

The Health Services Union says that more than 1500 paramedics in NSW have signed on threatening to boycott their professional registration. Every year paramedics have to be renewed under the Australian Health Practitioners Board and it means that if they don't renew their registration, they legally won't be allowed to take Triple Zero calls and attend to emergencies after the first of January. The HSU says it is all over a pay dispute and they want the government to give paramedics a nearly 25% pay rise that will bring them in line with other states and territories.

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[Back to Top](#)

## TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

### Grant to help blood pressure research

Newcastle Herald, General News, 16/11/2023, Page 6

Newcastle researchers are hoping to end the often lengthy "trial and error" approach to finding the right blood pressure treatment by using genetics to match the right medicine to the right person. Timely control of blood pressure is essential to reduce serious cardiovascular emergencies and chronic heart disease. Nearly two million Australians regularly take a medicine for high blood pressure on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

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[Back to Top](#)

## MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

## BENEFITS INTEGRITY

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

## HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

## SPORT

### 'Matilda' scores as 2023 word of the year

Canberra Times, General News, 16/11/2023, Page 11

Australia's national football team has waltzed into the history books again, this time as the namesake for the 2023 word of the year. Australian National University Dictionary Centre experts on Wednesday declared "matilda" the word of the year after the nation became transfixed over the team's FIFA Women's World Cup journey.

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

### Coach role repeatedly abused to indecently assault child

Canberra Times, General News, 16/11/2023, Tim Piccione, Page 11

A coach has methodically abused his position and a young girl's aspirations of playing sport professionally to indecently assault her numerous times over more than a year. The 71-year-old predator, who cannot be named for legal reasons, eventually attempted to convince the child to begin a sexual relationship with him.

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### Clock is ticking on big calls for 2032

Courier Mail, Editorials, 16/11/2023, Page 24

Brisbane was awarded the 2032 Olympic Games exactly 849 days ago, and if the clock wasn't already ticking on some big decisions about venues, it sure as heck is now a full two years and four months on. It is well known that the end of this year marks the deadline for the biggest of those decisions that decision being what the plan is for the rebuild of the Gabba to serve as the main Olympic and Paralympic stadium, and therefore where to rehome the Brisbane Lions AFL team and cricket for what will be close to a decade from when the demolition work begins in early 2026.

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### Trust lost in Games fiasco

Herald Sun, Editorials, 16/11/2023, Page 20

Hiding behind procedural technicalities won't wash with Victorians. Especially when taxpayers have forked out at least \$380m and probably a lot more for the Andrews and now Allan government's gross mishandling of the Commonwealth Games.

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

### Olympic dreams head to the bush

Northern Territory News, General News, 16/11/2023, Page 8

A host of Olympians have made their way to remote Top End communities this week sharing their personal journeys and hardships in the hopes of inspiring kids to chase their dreams. Mack Horton, Brad Hore and Natalie Burton were among the Australian sporting greats to share their messages across Katherine and Mataranka.

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### 'Matilda' scores in play for nation's word of the year

Border Mail, General News, 16/11/2023, Page 11

Australia's national women's soccer team has waltzed into the history books again, this time as the namesake for the 2023 word of the year. Australian National University Dictionary Centre experts on Wednesday declared "matilda" the word of the year after the nation became transfixed over the team's FIFA Women's World Cup journey.

Also reported by: [Burnie Advocate \(Burnie\)](#), [Launceston Examiner \(Launceston\)](#)

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## Nations support Australia hosting 2026 Commonwealth Games

Commonwealth nations are throwing their support behind Australia hosting the 2026 Commonwealth Games, but a decision on a host still remains uncertain. Commonwealth Games Australia (CGA) chief executive Craig Phillips is meeting with officials from other nations in Singapore this week after Victoria in July pulled out of hosting the 2026 Games.

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

## **They're already household names and now, the Matlidas are being recognised in Australia's lexicon**

ABC Online, Other, 15/11/2023, Kate Midena

The Matildas captured hearts, minds, television screens and stadiums across the country when they played in the World Cup earlier this year, and it seems they have captured the team behind this year's Word of the Year, too. The Australian National Dictionary Centre, based at Australian National University, has picked the word 'Matilda' as the Word of the Year for 2023, due to its rich history and the revival our soccer stars have brought to it.

[Read More](#)

## **Australia given three-month deadline to find Commonwealth Games host as trio of mystery bids emerge**

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 16/11/2023, Ollie Lewis

Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) hierarchy say finding an Australian host for the 2026 edition remains the priority while appealing for government support. Welshman Chris Jenkins was voted president at the CGF's general assembly in on Wednesday on a platform of 'remodelling' the Games.

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[Back to Top](#)

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## HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

### **Advancing medicine in scientist's DNA**

The Australian, Business News, 16/11/2023, Glenda Korporaal, Page 20

When genomic scientist Daniel MacArthur had the opportunity to set up a new Centre for Population Genomics in Australia in 2019, he jumped at the chance to return home after 12 years living overseas. Based in Boston as co-director of the Medical and Population Genomics Program at the Broad Institute for Mendelian Genomics at MIT and Harvard, his work in the US had involved using new genomic technologies to help predict and diagnose diseases.

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### **Region has the elements to boost medtech ambitions**

Newcastle Herald, General News, 16/11/2023, Kate O'Mara, Page 14

Healthcare and the potential it presents the region's companies to enter an emerging, opportunity-rich industry sector has become a stronger focus for the Hunter Central Coast. The region has a distinguished manufacturing history. Shipbuilding and steelmaking have previously underpinned its economic strength and now it's food manufacturing and the multibillion-dollar resources and defence sectors that continue to call on the region's high-performing SMEs to produce crucial equipment, technology and products.

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[Back to Top](#)

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## FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

### **Health leader named Victorian Australian of the Year**

National Indigenous Times, Other, 15/11/2023, Rachael Ward

Indigenous health leader Janine Mohamed has been selected as the 2024 Australian of the Year for Victoria for championing culturally safe healthcare and forging pathways for indigenous health workers. The 49-year-old Narungga Kurna woman has worked in nursing, health policy and research in the Indigenous community controlled health sector for the last 25 years.

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[Back to Top](#)

## OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

### Engineered stone ban wins support

Hobart Mercury, General News, 16/11/2023, Page 4

The Tasmanian government will support a national ban on engineered stone, a product blamed for an alarming rise in silicosis in workers. Safe Work Australia has recommended a prohibition on the use of all engineered stone, which is commonly used in kitchen benchtops and similar products.

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### Ikea joins ban on benches

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 16/11/2023, Courtney Gould and Eleanor Campbell, Page 7

Governments are under pressure to ban engineered stone linked to potentially fatal lung disease after two top retailers phased out kitchen benches in response to damning workplace safety findings. Swedish furniture retailer Ikea scrapped a kitchen benchtop range on Tuesday, following Bunnings, after a Safe Work Australia report recommended a ban on engineered stone to protect workers from contracting silicosis.

Also reported by: [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#).

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### Bunnings to ditch silicosis-causing engineered stone from end of year as pressure mounts

Newcastle Herald, General News, 15/11/2023, Samantha Lock, Page 24

Hardware chain Bunnings will stop selling engineered stone from the end of the year as pressure mounts for a national ban on the silicosis-causing material. Unions have been campaigning for the chain, owned by retail and industrial conglomerate Wesfarmers, to pull kitchen bench tops from its product line-up to protect workers from the deadly condition.

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

### ACT enforces new rules on engineered stone in wake of silicosis fears

Canberra Times, Other, 15/11/2023, Steve Evans

The workplace safety regulator in the ACT is toughening its policing of new laws to protect workers from silica dust. SafeWork ACT has introduced a new code of practice for work places where engineered stone, bricks, tiles, concrete and other dust-generating materials are processed.

[Read More](#)

### Pill testing trial formally on offer after deaths

Canberra Times, Other, 15/11/2023, Cassandra Morgan

Experienced emergency physicians would be on standby at a music festival under an official pitch to the Victorian government to host a free pill testing trial. Harm Reduction Australia and Pill Testing Australia on Wednesday announced they formally offered to host a public health based pill testing trial at a festival of the government's choice this summer, at no cost to the state.

[Read More](#)

### Bunnings' engineered stone: Wife of silicosis sufferer praises hardware giant for banning deadly product and now she wants a federal ban

Cristale Harrison's, 33, husband Ben, 34, was diagnosed with dust disease silicosis, a terminal condition, in 2019 and since then the couple have been advocating for man-made stone to be banned in Australia. Man-made or engineered stone has been linked to silicosis due to its high silica content which trades breathe in during the cutting process.

[Read More](#)

## **IKEA follows Bunnings in phasing out engineered stone due to lung disease concerns**

SBS, Other, 15/11/2023

Calls have mounted for a nationwide ban on the popular kitchen benchtop material to protect workers from its potentially deadly effects. Ikea Australia will start phasing out its use of engineered stone, following a similar announcement by Bunnings on Tuesday.

[Read More](#)

## **Ikea joins Bunnings in banning engineered stone products linked to silicosis**

The Guardian, Other, 15/11/2023, Daisy Dumas

Swedish furniture giant Ikea has become the latest household name to ban engineered stone from its product range. The homeware superstore was criticised by the construction workers' union for selling the composite material, made from crushed quartz and resin, despite evidence that its toxic dust causes the fatal lung disease silicosis.

[Read More](#)

## **Sky News Live, AM Agenda, 15/11/2023, Laura Jayes**

The Federal Government is under growing pressure to ban the importation, manufacture and use of engineered stone. The product has killed one in four workers through diseases, including silicosis. Bunnings and IKEA have now announced they will phase out the use of engineered stone in their products. CFMEU National Secretary Zach Smith says there is no safe level of exposure.

[Play Now](#)

## **Radio National, Breakfast, 15/11/2023, Patricia Karvelas / Hamish Macdonald**

The Vic Greens are calling on the Allan Labor Government to roll out pill-testing services in time for the summer festival season. Last month, more than 70 health and community organisations wrote an open letter calling on the Vic Government to establish a drug testing service to quell rising deaths linked to the consumption of new psychoactive substances.

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[Back to Top](#)

# **THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION**

## **Covid Qld: New booster unlikely to arrive before latest wave peaks**

Adelaide Now, Other, 15/11/2023, Jackie Sinnerton and Madura McCormack

Experts call for rush on new Covid-19 booster deliveries before wave peaks in couple weeks, as slow delivery and uptake of existing boosters has delivered a decrease in community immunity. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration approved a monovalent XBB.

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

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## **Are edibles the new after-work wine?**

Adelaide Now, Other, 15/11/2023, Katherine Chatfield

A surprising number of women are swapping a cold glass of pinot gris for evening edibles, garnering them the nickname Gummy Mummies. Should we be worried? Body+Soul investigates. [...] Between 2016 and 2018, just 588 cannabis products were prescribed, according to figures from the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

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

[Read More](#)

## 'My husband has been secretly giving our 5yo melatonin every night before bed'

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 15/11/2023, Alexandra Feiam

Sitting on the couch in her living room, Sarah\* was surprised when her five-year-old daughter Kaya\* approached her. [...] More than a third of Australian kids suffer from sleep issues, the TGA explained, and despite its explosion in popularity, they have advised parents to rely only on gummies as a final resort.

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[Back to Top](#)

## OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

### 'Prohibition is failing': Ex-police chief urges reform on cannabis

Age, General News, 16/11/2023, Jewel Topsfield, Page 8

Former Australian Federal Police boss Mick Palmer says the prohibition of cannabis use "is not just failing, it is causing real harm", and has described his journey from a hard-nosed policeman to a vocal advocate for cannabis law reform. In a speech at Victoria's Parliament House yesterday, Palmer said that when he was a detective in the Northern Territory in the 1960s, he used to arrest people for possessing and using cannabis at parties.

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[Back to Top](#)

## FOOD STANDARDS

### Australian children exposed to aggressive marketing of unhealthy foods – study

The Guardian, Other, 15/11/2023, Natasha May

Australian children are being exposed to aggressive marketing of foods that are rated too unhealthy for young people in many other countries, new research has shown. A study led by researchers at the George Institute for Global Health published on Wednesday in Public Health Nutrition shows a direct correlation between packaged foods with low nutritional value and high use of marketing directed at children.

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[Back to Top](#)

## AICIS

### 'Santa's House' a PFAS site

Daily Advertiser, General News, 16/11/2023, Taylor Dodge, Page 1

A once-traditional display for Riverina children and families over the Christmas period has led to soil contamination at three Wagga homes. The front yard of an Athol Street home - often referred to as "Santa's House" for its glorious annual Christmas displays - along with the two homes on either side of it, have been found to be contaminated with PFAS, Fire and Rescue NSW has confirmed.

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