



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Sunday, 19th November 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Sunday Times \(page 1\)](#)** reports that Health Minister Mark Butler is considering providing Australians access to new and better-targeted COVID vaccines, following a meeting on Friday by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI).
- **[The Sunday Herald Sun \(page 9\)](#)** reports that new data from Monash University's Victorian injury surveillance unit shows dog attacks in Victoria have increased for the fifth year in a row, with Victorian emergency departments having treated over 15,600 patients for dog bites between July 2017 and June 2022.
- **[The Sunday Mail Brisbane \(page 6\)](#)** reports that the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) has defended its bone marrow transplant protocols following a patient death after contracting a fungal infection. RBWH cancer care services executive director Glen Kennedy said the infection was not connected to the outbreak at the Prince Charles Hospital.

MINISTER BUTLER

Stronger COVID vax is on its way

Sunday Times, General News, 19/11/2023, John Flint, Page 1

Australians might get access to new and better targeted COVID vaccines within days. The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) is set to advise Health Minister Mark Butler if he should approve the booster jab available in the United States and Europe.

Also reported by: [Pilbara News \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), and widely syndicated across regional publications

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Stop the smokes

Launceston Examiner, General News, 18/11/2023, Isabel Bird, Page 1

Tasmanians aged 14 or younger would be banned from ever buying cigarettes under laws being advocated by health group Smokefree Tasmania. [...] Health-focused group Smokefree Tasmania began fighting for similar state laws in 2012, and has sent a letter to Federal Health Minister Mark Butler arguing for Tobacco Free Generation laws to be adopted in Australia.

Also reported by: [Tasmanian Examiner \(Online\)](#), [The Advocate \(Burnie\) \(Online\)](#).

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Telehealth cuts could hurt

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 18/11/2023, Blair Jackson, Page 4

Removing initial specialist consultations from telehealth services would have "immeasurable" negative cost and cultural implications, a North Queensland health executive warned. [...] A spokesman for Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the committee report had not been finalised and stakeholder feedback on the draft report would be considered by the independent Medicare Review Advisory Committee.

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

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MINISTER WELLS

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

From remote housing to federal parliament, Indigenous-led co-design is a game changer

Croakey, Other, 18/11/2023, Ruth Armstrong

"Indigenous knowledge is a resource and an opportunity." This quote, from Torres Strait Islander academic Francis Nona, sums up the first day of national sessions at the HEAL2023 conference on Thursday 16 November. [...] The Ministerial Roundtable was hosted by the Lowitja Institute at Parliament House, and attended by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts and community leaders, and government representatives including Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care Ged

Kearney, Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy Jenny McAllister, Senators Jana Stewart and Dorinda Cox and Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians Chief of Staff Sheralee Taylor.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCCARTHY

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DEPARTMENT

Where a trip to the dentist will hurt your wallet the most

Sun Herald, General News, 19/11/2023, Natassia Chrysanthos, Page 6

Australians are paying an average of \$230 for a standard check-up and clean at the dentist or up to \$300 when they visit a new clinic as consumers continue to pay the bulk of the country's dental costs. [...] The health department's submission to the inquiry said "a significant proportion of costs for dental services are borne by individuals, therefore access to services is likely to be impacted by the rising cost of living".

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

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Stronger COVID vax is on its way

Sunday Times, General News, 19/11/2023, John Flint, Page 1

Australians might get access to new and better targeted COVID vaccines within days. The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) is set to advise Health Minister Mark Butler if he should approve the booster jab available in the United States and Europe.

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CORONAVIRUS

WA COVID surge prompts return of mask mandate

7news.com.au, Other, 18/11/2023, Aaron Bunch

A surge in COVID-19 cases has prompted the West Australian government to reintroduce face mask rules at Perth public hospitals. Staff and patients will be ordered to wear surgical masks in high-risk clinical areas from Monday, Premier Roger Cook says.

[Read More](#)

COVID cases climb across MLHD, residents told to take care

Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, Other, 18/11/2023, Taylor Dodge

Residents are being urged to reinstate COVID-19 precautions heading into the festive season as case numbers surge across the Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD). The latest NSW Respiratory Surveillance Report by NSW Health ending November 4 shows an increase of more than 50 cases across the MLHD compared to the fortnight prior, ending October 21.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Council warns of bushfire risk to elderly

Sun Herald, General News, 19/11/2023, Andrew Taylor, Page 22

A Sydney council is fighting against the redevelopment of a rundown retirement village in a bushfire-prone suburb, warning that vulnerable elderly residents would be at risk. Developer Levande wants its Lourdes Retirement Village in Killara rezoned from low to medium density and maximum building heights more than doubled to 22 metres to permit an upgrade of the facility.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Young Aussies turn their backs on booze

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 19/11/2023, Page 12

Young people are choosing to cut back on alcohol, according to new research. More Australians than ever are opting to reduce their alcohol consumption or even adopting sobriety, according to new research from DrinkWise.

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

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NDIS review a necessary evil

Sunday Telegraph, Editorials, 19/11/2023, Page 86

It was always going to be tough for any government to navigate any trimming of the funding offered to clients of the NDIS. It is difficult to remove assistance offered to people with disabilities, especially when their needs have been criminally under-resourced for so long.

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Finding hope after loss

Sunday Territorian, General News, 19/11/2023, Talara McHugh, Page 1

When Selena Uiibo found out she was expecting her fourth child in late 2022, she was overcome with emotion and burst into tears. But they weren't tears of joy, they were of anxiety and fear: fear of losing another little bundle of joy after previously suffering two tragic preterm baby losses.

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Labor to tighten access to NDIS

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 19/11/2023, James Campbell, Page 1

The Albanese government plans to crack down on the exploding cost of the National Disability Insurance Scheme by tightening up eligibility criteria as a new report finds it is responsible for the soaring number of children being diagnosed with autism. Talks are under way with the states on the need to change eligibility for the scheme, which is set to cost taxpayers \$42bn this financial year.

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

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Gutwein sets pace to improve men's health

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 19/11/2023, Sue Bailey, Page 18

Former Premier Peter Gutwein is on a mission to improve men's health. While men have traditionally not lived as long as women and had poorer health outcomes, a Tasmanian academic says the tide is turning and the gap is closing.

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Promoting health literacy

Sunday Examiner, General News, 19/11/2023, Stephanie Dalton, Page 2

With the help of food, art, and culture, a new program aims to improve the health literacy of Tasmania's migrant communities. Since the United in Tasmania program launched in late September, the Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania (MRC) has helped to deliver three educational sessions sharing vital health messages with more than 50 women from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

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Can your suburb impact your health?

Sunday Examiner, General News, 19/11/2023, Stephanie Dalton, Page 3

Can the suburb you live in impact the state of your health? According to the City of Launceston's 2023 State of the City report - kind of. The report identified two data blocks for all 54 localities/suburbs within Launceston (local government area) LGA, including long-term health conditions and demographics.

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More young Australians choosing to socialise without alcohol

NEWS.com.au, Other, 18/11/2023, Eli Green

Young people are choosing to cut back on alcohol with more than three-quarters opting to socialise in ways that avoid boozing according to new research. More Australians than ever are choosing to cut back on alcohol or adopt sobriety, however, some of the most surprising results have come from Australians aged 18-24, according to new research from DrinkWise.

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

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Susan Leamon has suffered with osteoarthritis for nearly 15 years

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 19/11/2023, Sandhya Ram

One in five Australians over the age of 45 face chronic pain and disability due to osteoarthritis, with rates nearly doubling over the past decade in Cairns, according to internal data released by Medibank. According to the latest 2021 Census statistics (which included health data for the first time), 8 per cent of Cairns residents have arthritis and the average age of the Cairns population is increasing, rising from 37 in 2016 to 41 in 2021.

Also reported by: [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#).

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Queensland mum was worried about stubborn spot on her nose. Her GP told her it was nothing. This is her warning

7news.com.au, Other, 18/11/2023, Jacqueline Mey

It looked like a blocked pore. It was small and raised and ugly.' Kate Bourke couldn't stand the unsightly mark on her nose. [...] Cancer Council Australia According to Cancer Council Australia (CCA), basal cell carcinoma and squamous-cell carcinoma are the two most common types of non-melanoma skin cancers.

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A GP guide to cardiovascular disease in women

Australian Doctor, Other, 18/11/2023, Sarah Zaman and Anushriya Pant

Understanding the sex-specific differences of CVD in women is essential to the delivery of better, individualised prevention and improved outcomes for patients.

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PRIMARY CARE

Hospitals treat 10 dog bites a day

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 19/11/2023, Sarah Booth and Brittany Busch, Page 9

Victorian hospitals are treating 10 people for dog bites every day, with attacks increasing for the fifth year in a row. Emergency departments treated more than 15,600 patients - including 2348 children - for dog bites between July 2017 and June 2022, new data from Monash University's Victorian injury surveillance unit shows.

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Open (your wallet) wide

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 19/11/2023, Brad Crouch, Page 19

The cost of going to the dentist is causing people to end up in hospital with potentially avoidable problems, a medical survey company says. Cleanbill researched and called all 6268 dental clinics they could find across Australia to get information on their pricing and availability.

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45 people chose to die in SA

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 19/11/2023, Brad Crouch, Page 25

The Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board annual report shows that from January 31 to June 30, 68 people received a VAD permit from the Chief Executive of the Department for Health and Wellbeing. Of these, 45 people have died, aged from their 20s to their 90s.

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Tassie feels dentist bite

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 19/11/2023, Sue Bailey, Page 4

The average cost of a standard check-up and clean at a dentist in Tasmania is \$251 the third most expensive in Australia, a new report reveals. Cleanbill, a free online healthcare directory, contacted 6268 dental clinics across Australia to get pricing data.

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Connect with ABC News

ABC Online, Other, 18/11/2023, Grace Jennings-Edquist

Sharni Watt was hospitalised with mastitis twice in her son's first months of life. Her breasts became red and "rock hard," she developed a fever and flu-like symptoms, "and my milk supply was dropping, which I was really concerned about," says Sharni, a 35-year-old lawyer.

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Queensland grandfather dies after waiting for hospital bed in ambulance

7news.com.au, Other, 18/11/2023, Laine Clark

A Queensland grandfather has died after allegedly waiting hours in an ambulance for a hospital bed west of Brisbane. Health Minister Shannon Fentiman said a full clinical review was under way after Wayne Irving died at Ipswich Hospital early on Friday morning.

[Read More](#)

Wollongong residents face higher costs to see a GP, amid drop in bulk-billing doctors

Illawarra Mercury, Other, 18/11/2023, Kate McIlwain

The percentage of GPs who say they are fully bulk billing patients halved and the average cost to see a doctor went up by \$10 in a year, according to Australia's peak body for GPs. The Royal Australian

College of General Practitioners' annual survey of doctors from across the country showed the proportion of GPs who bulk billed all their patients went from 24 per cent in 2022 to 12 per cent in 2023.

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Channel 10, 10 News First (Weekend) , 18/11/2023, Chris Bath

The WA Government has stated ambulance ramping is improving in the state, contrary to a national report into hospital delays. The Australian Medical Association has claimed the ramping review reveals all states are falling behind.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Birth expert pulls out of conference discussion

Sun Herald, General News, 19/11/2023, Angus Thomson, Page 9

NSW Mental Health Minister Rose Jackson has criticised the health department for asking a birth trauma expert to change her presentation at a conference, leading two psychologists to pull out. Clinical psychologist Lucy Frankham was due to present her newly published paper on birth trauma at the NSW Health Perinatal and Infant Mental Health symposium last week, but her presentation was abruptly pulled from the schedule when she refused to remove the term "obstetric violence" from her planned talk.

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A nightmare when good science is contaminated by bad politics

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 19/11/2023, Peta Credlin, Page 21

Everyone wants to do the right thing by troubled young people but does that mean agreeing to irreversible chemical and surgical changes to teenagers who might just be confused or unsure about who they are and how they best fit in? Despite doctors in Britain and elsewhere calling time on "gender affirmation therapy", new guidelines from the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne have reportedly just affirmed the prescription of puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones by GPs, without the oversight of multidisciplinary specialist teams.

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

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Mind how you talk to men

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 19/11/2023, Robyn Riley, Page 30

A world-first Australian study has found most mental health clinicians do not feel confident to help men in suicidal crisis, but that with training this can change. The study reports that despite an increase in demand for mental health services since the pandemic, many practitioners feel unprepared counselling men in distress.

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

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I feared that my baby would die

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 19/11/2023, Rebecca Whitfield-Baker, Page 58

Steph Schmidt is an intelligent and engaging clinical psychologist, farmer, wife and mum who thought she was immune to postnatal depression. She was wrong.

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How an ADHD diagnosis and Ritalin turned into full-blown psychosis for Natalia

Natalia's story started with a simple thought in 2019, just five words long: "What if I have ADHD?" She'd been reading about ADHD in the news, and many of the symptoms sounded familiar.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

'Wake-up call' on GPs' future

Sunraysia Daily, Other, 18/11/2023, Wade Stephens

A young doctor training for his GP fellowship has revealed the significant barriers students face if they want to enter general practice. Originally from western Sydney, Jack Williams* moved to Mildura in late 2021, becoming a GP registrar in February this year.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

Wollongong residents face higher costs to see a GP, amid drop in bulk-billing doctors

Illawarra Mercury, Other, 18/11/2023, Kate McIlwain

The percentage of GPs who say they are fully bulk billing patients halved and the average cost to see a doctor went up by \$10 in a year, according to Australia's peak body for GPs. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' annual survey of doctors from across the country showed the proportion of GPs who bulk billed all their patients went from from 24 per cent in 2022 to 12 per cent in 2023.

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

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SPORT

Tennis plan hit out of court by residents

Sun Herald, General News, 19/11/2023, Andrew Taylor, Page 22

Plans to allow sports such as netball and pickleball to use tennis courts in Sydney's eastern suburbs have been dumped after residents claimed it would attract children and generate noise. Woollahra Municipal Council will hold a new tender process to find an operator for Cooper Park tennis courts in Woollahra following opposition to a proposal to share the facility with other sports.

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Olympian effort with technology can take us to the next level

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 19/11/2023, Ed Chung, Page 10

As the CEO of a homegrown technology company, I have the privilege of witnessing the boundless potential of innovation every day. In 2032, Brisbane stands at the threshold of a remarkable opportunity - hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

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Let's get AFL 9s put on Brisbane Olympic stage

Sunday Territorian, General News, 19/11/2023, Luke Gosling, Page 13

We live and breathe AFL here in the Northern Territory. You would have heard about our plans to build our very own multipurpose AFL stadium in Darwin City and we also want our own AFL team.

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Rugby Australia chair Hamish McLennan and RA board receive letter from state and territory unions urging McLennan to resign

ABC Online, Other, 18/11/2023

Rugby Australia chairman Hamish McLennan has been given an ultimatum to quit his post by six of his own member unions, including the Queensland Rugby Union, ACT Rugby and RugbyWA. The six unions, which also include South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory, sent a letter to McLennan and the board of RA demanding the resignation.

Similar coverage reported by: [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Walking for the lost children

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 19/11/2023, Page 19

When Elizabeth Tierney lost her beloved boy Cooper to mitochondrial disease at just six months of age, he left behind some special gifts. As she prepares to join 1100 people for the Mito Foundation's 35km Bloody Long Walk along the coast of Sydney today, Ms Tierney said Cooper - who was diagnosed with mito at just three weeks was her inspiration to take part in the event to raise money for research to find a cure for the disease.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

"I don't know any of my relatives who have died of old age" - NT youth speaks out on heart disease

National Indigenous Times, Other, 18/11/2023, Dechlan Brennan

"Another day. Another family member dies. Another funeral. I feel as though I attend more funerals than birthday celebrations. And I'd like that to change for the sake of future generations."

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OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Latest fungal infection death 'not linked' to PCH cluster

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 19/11/2023, Madura McCormack , Page 6

A major state hospital has declared it is "very confident" in its bone marrow transplant protocols after a patient died after contracting a fungal infection. The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital is the latest major health facility to become embroiled in a string of cases involving patients dying after contracting fungal infections, with Prince Charles Hospital still dealing with a five-person cluster.

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Channel 10, 10 News First (Weekend) , 18/11/2023, Chris Bath

A third transplant patient passed away in Queensland due to fungal infection. Jurgen Zoller's wife, Dani, is now calling for a reform of transplant safety protocols. Meantime, five other patients were infected by a fungal cluster at the Prince Charles Hospital.

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2GB, Weekends, 18/11/2023, Michael McLaren

There are more calls for a national ban on engineered stone. The Government is under pressure to ban a toxic concrete linked to fatal disease, after top retailers phased a series of products due to scathing workplace safety findings. Safe Work Australia report has recommended a ban on engineered stone to prevent silicosis. Senator Jacqui Lambie and others have called for a nationwide ban on such materials.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

New Covid strain explained: symptoms, booster shots & Vic restrictions

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 18/11/2023

Victoria could be heading towards another Covid Christmas so what exactly will it mean? [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration has recently approved new vaccines and we can expect them soon.

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

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