



TODAY'S NEWS

Wednesday, 29th November 2023

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Age \(page 3\)](#)** reports that Ambulance Victoria is reviewing the case of a Ballarat woman whose leg was amputated after she was left waiting four hours for an ambulance. *Also reported by: [Herald Sun](#)*
- **[The Courier Mail \(page 6\)](#)** reports that six Queenslanders are reported to be infected with Ralstonia bacteria from contaminated saline solutions that have since been recalled, bringing the national case total to 43. *Also reported by: [Hobart Mercury](#)*
- **[The Herald Sun \(page 8\)](#)** reports that more than 5700 complaints have been made to Victoria's health watchdog in the last year, resulting in 24 investigations.
- **[ABC Online](#)** reports the federal government has announced that importing single-use vapes will be banned from January 1, 2024, with doctors and nurses to prescribe therapeutic vaping devices. Health Minister Mark Butler said, "All Australian governments are committed to working together to stop the disturbing growth in vaping among our young people."
- **[The Canberra Times \(Online\)](#)** reports that the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has found that Australia's health system spent \$48 billion on its COVID response, two per cent higher than AIHW predictions for the period.

- [The Guardian \(Online\)](#) reports that three additional public hospitals in the greater Melbourne region will now offer abortion services to improve access for residents.
- [SBS \(Online\)](#) reports that New South Wales has legislated voluntary assisted dying laws, making it the final state in Australia to do so.

MINISTER BUTLER

Crackdown on vaping a vital fight for health

Burnie Advocate, General News, 29/11/2023, Alex Fair, Page 11

The moves made by the federal government to crack down on vaping simply have to be applauded. As Health Minister Mark Butler has said, this is a major health issue for the country, especially when you keep in mind the impact on our younger population.

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Region's prostate cancer problem

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 29/11/2023, Kate McIlwain, Page 11

Men in the Illawarra are being diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer at more than double the national rate, with the region identified as one of 20 prostate cancer hot spots across Australia. [...] Ms Savage said her charity was talking to Health Minister Mark Butler about the need for an awareness campaign similar to those for bowel and breast cancer.

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NW has second highest rate of prostate cancer

North West Telegraph, General News, 29/11/2023, Cain Andrews, Page 13

It has been revealed WA's North West has the second highest rate of advanced prostate cancer in the country - behind only the Northern Territory. [...] "We are tremendously grateful to Health Minister Mark Butler for supporting men and families in our community with this new listing.

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Federal government releases timeline for major crackdown on vaping in Australia

ABC Online, Other, 28/11/2023, Monte Bovill

Single-use vapes will be banned from being imported into Australia from the beginning of next year as part of the federal government's vaping crackdown. Health Minister Mark Butler has described vaping as a "major public health issue" and earlier this year announced stronger regulations and stricter controls around the importation and sale of vapes.

Also reported by: [9News \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [HotCopper Australia \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [Pedestrian TV \(Online\)](#), [Sky News Australia \(Online\)](#), [Yahoo! News Australia \(Online\)](#), [Yahoo! News Australia \(Online\)](#), [Yahoo! News Australia \(Online\)](#), [Yahoo! News Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Mark Butler accuses pathology company of withholding results from My Health Record

Australian Doctor, Other, 28/11/2023, Sarah Simpkins

The minister said Healius had not responded to his office's concerns. Pathology giant Healius is putting patients at risk by not uploading results to My Health Record, Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler claims.

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Federal government backs the development of treatment for childhood

brain cancer

Biotech Dispatch, Other, 28/11/2023

Health Minister Mark Butler has announced that the federal government will invest over \$700,000 to support the development of a potential new treatment that targets a type of childhood brain cancer with no known cure or treatment options. The cancer is known as diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG).

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How China is staging 'a reverse opium war' on Australia ahead of world's first vape ban

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 28/11/2023, Blake Antrobus

A leading Australian vape advocate has called for an urgent overhaul to the government's approach to regulating vaping across the country, claiming the current approach is leading to China staging a 'reverse Opium War'. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler will introduce some of the harshest laws in the world to crack down on unregulated vaping products from January 1 2023, handing sweeping powers to states to ban the import of e-cigarette or vape products.

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ECAJ Annual Conference see presidency move to Melbourne

J-Wire, Other, 28/11/2023, Ilan Harris

The annual conference of The Executive Council of Australian Jewry held at Sydney's Moriah College saw its leadership move to Melbourne from Sydney. [...] ' Mark Butler, the federal Minister for Health and Aged Care, spoke at the annual conference on behalf of the prime minister whom he called one of his oldest friends in parliament.

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We stand ready to help more patients

Retail Pharmacy, Other, 28/11/2023

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia is backing calls by physiotherapists and other allied health professionals in working to their full skills and training to help more patients. [...] "As Health Minister Mark Butler acknowledged only recently, pharmacists have long been calling for a shake up of the health system to improve waiting times and hospital access.

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Aussies saving big bucks on medicine and medical appointments in spite of cost of living crunch

Starts at 60, Other, 28/11/2023, Melanie Rosettenstein

Legislative changes to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) have led to massive in-pocket savings, which will no doubt be a boon for retired Australians who must manage high living costs on a fixed income. [...] Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler said, "We went to the election promising Australians we would make it cheaper to see a doctor and that's what we have delivered".

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'We need this surgery': Community fight to save medical centre escalates

The Advocate (Burnie), Other, 28/11/2023, Libby Bingham

Worried East Devonport residents say they are concerned about the health of many vulnerable patients if the only East Devonport GP clinic closes. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler's office was contacted.

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Movember's fight to stop years shaved off men's lives

West Australian, Other, 29/11/2023, Jacob Shteyman

As Movember celebrates its 20th anniversary, men's health advocates have no illusions about the scale of the challenge that still lies ahead. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler will on Wednesday unveil the charity's new \$100 million institute, which aims to accelerate research into men's health issues such as

mental health, prostate and testicular cancers and health literacy, and translate it into real world outcomes.

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ABC News, Mornings, 28/11/2023, Karina Carvalho

Importing single-use vapes into Australia will be banned from the beginning of 2024 as part of a Federal Government crackdown. A new process for doctors and nurses to prescribe vapes will also take effect. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says vaping is a major public health issue and the growth of the habit among young people is disturbing.

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Channel 10, 10 News First: Midday, 28/11/2023, Hugh Riminton

Interview Anita Dessaix, Chair, Cancer Council of Australia's Public Health Committee, on Health Minister Mark Butler's scheduled announcement of a ban on disposable single-use vape imports from January and a ban on the personal importation of all vapes and on wholesale imports of non-therapeutic vapes from March. Medical practitioners and nurses will be able to prescribe vapes for adults trying to reduce their cigarette use. Dessaix says the Cancer Council commends the Federal Government on the announcement.

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Channel 7, The Morning Show, 28/11/2023, Larry Emdur and Monique Wright

The next steps in a national vaping crackdown have been revealed, and today, Health Minister Mark Butler will announce a ban on the importation of disposable single-use vapes from next year. From March, it will be illegal to bring them into the country for personal use. Tougher guidelines on therapeutic vapes and outlawing domestic manufacture will also follow. Butler says the habit is creating a new generation of nicotine dependency.

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Channel 9 Darwin, National Nine News, 28/11/2023, Josh Bavas

A clamp on vaping will be introduced here from New Year's Day to prevent the next generation of nicotine addicts. An import ban on single-use devices will be imposed and retailers hit with tough penalties by mid-year. Health Minister Mark Butler says they are not going to blame the victims, they are going to go after the suppliers.

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Sky News Live, Newsday, 28/11/2023, Tom Connell

Press conference by Mark Butler, Health Minister, regarding the Federal Government's plan to ban single-use vapes from the beginning of 2024. Butler says the device is a public health menace for young people and there are concerns about high schoolers wearing nicotine patches to wean off the drug. He adds doctors will still be able to prescribe vapes which can be picked up from pharmacies while from March, people would also be prohibited from importing any type of vapes.

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4BC, 14:00 News, 28/11/2023

The Australian Border Force will receive an extra \$25m in federal funding to crack down on the import of disposable vapes. The nicotine product will be banned nationwide from the start of 2024. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says nicotine smoking is the biggest preventable death in Australia. GPs will be able to prescribe non-disposable vapes for people trying to quit smoking.

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ABC Radio Adelaide, 22:00 News, 28/11/2023

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says New Zealand's decision to wind back plans for age based smoking bans is a reminder of the tobacco lobby's influence. Under the plans, the sale of cigarettes

was to be banned from the middle of next year to anyone born after January 1st, 2009.

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ABC Radio Brisbane, 06:30 News, 28/11/2023

The first stage of the Federal Government's crackdown on vaping will take effect in January when importing single-use vapes into Australia will be banned. Health Minister Mark Butler has described vaping as a major public health issue and announced stronger rules around the importation and sale of vapes this year. Importing refillable non-therapeutic vapes will also be banned from March next year and tighter rules around flavours, nicotine concentration levels, and packaging will also be enforced.

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ABC Radio Canberra, Afternoons, 28/11/2023, Georgia Stynes

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says New Zealand's decision to wind back plans for age-based smoking bans is a reminder of the tobacco industry's influence. Under the plans, the sale of cigarettes was to be banned from the middle of next year for anyone born after 1 January 2009 but the new Centre-Right Government in New Zealand scrapped the plan, arguing the tax raised through cigarette sales is needed to fund income tax cuts.

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MINISTER WELLS

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

Crisis grows

Milton Ulladulla Times, General News, 29/11/2023, Damian McGill, Page 1

Federal Member for Gilmore Fiona Phillips is working to alleviate "an escalating GP crisis". [...] Caption Text: Federal Member for Gilmore Fiona Phillips and Assistant Health Minister Ged Kearney.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCCARTHY

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DEPARTMENT

Bringing disposable vapes into Australia to be illegal from January 1

9News, Other, 28/11/2023, Mikala Theocharous

The importation of disposable vapes will be illegal from January 1, 2024, as the first stage of the federal vaping reforms comes into effect. [...] One in seven 14 to 17-year-olds use disposable vapes, ? while one in five 18 to 24-year-olds, according to data from the Department of Health.

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Why Covid wave set to be deadliest yet for elderly if low vaccination rates continue

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 28/11/2023, Carla Mascarenhas

Experts are warning there could be thousands of Covid-19 deaths in aged care homes where vaccination rates have fallen dangerously low as Australia enters its eighth Covid-19 wave. While Covid cases are surging across the nation in the lead-up to Christmas, vaccination rates for aged care residents are currently tracking just below 40 per cent compared to January this year when they were sitting at over 90 per cent, according to data from the Department of Health and Welfare.

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

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Transitional aged care beds open in Figtree to ease pressure on struggling hospitals

Illawarra Mercury, Other, 28/11/2023, Natalie Croxon

Twenty transitional aged care beds will open at Figtree Private Hospital by the end of November, in a bid to ease the pressure on hospital wards. The program means hospitals can safely discharge elderly patients who still need support but do not yet have a bed at an aged care home.

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Call for GPs to inform key submission

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 28/11/2023

An upcoming review brings opportunity to influence healthcare reform and the future of primary care and the RACGP wants member input. [...] The RACGP is seeking member feedback on how current incentive programs impact them, their practice and patients, to help inform its submission to the Department of Health and Aged Care's (DoH) upcoming Effectiveness Review of General Practice Incentives.

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Free voluntary assisted dying legal resources for GPs

The Medical Republic, Other, 28/11/2023

As voluntary assisted dying laws come into operation in New South Wales, what do GPs need to know? [...] These evidence-based resources are available for free as part of End of Life Directions for Aged Care (ELDAC), a \$15.9 million palliative care initiative funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.

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CORONAVIRUS

Spare me. If you have a runny nose, stay home

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 29/11/2023, Laura Pettenuzzo, Page 20

The Uber driver coughed. A wet, sickly sound that played on repeat every minute or so, occasionally punctuated by a loud sneeze.

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

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\$14bn spent on Covid

Northern Territory News, General News, 29/11/2023, Page 3

Almost \$14bn was spent on Australia's health system response to Covid-19 until mid-2022, a new report says. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare says that the amount spent on Covid-19 from the financial years 2019-20 to 2021-22 was some 72 per cent of total funds spent on health.

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

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Australians spent more than \$870 million on sanitiser, face masks and tests in the years after COVID emerged

ABC Online, Other, 29/11/2023, Leonie Thorne

New analysis from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) shows how much was spent on healthcare during the first three years of the pandemic. And while it's probably no surprise that governments spent billions of dollars fighting the virus, the numbers reveal Australians also spent millions trying to protect themselves from the disease.

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Australia spent almost \$48 billion on the health system's response to COVID-19, report reveals

9News, Other, 28/11/2023, Serena Seyfort

Australia spent almost \$48 billion on the health system's response to COVID-19, a new government report has revealed. The federal government spent an estimated \$35.1 billion, while state and territory governments together spent an estimated \$11.9 billion from 2019 to 2022, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) report, which has been released today.

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Health system coughs up almost \$50b fighting COVID

Canberra Times, Other, 29/11/2023, Alex Mitchell

Australia's health system dropped a whopping \$48 billion on the COVID-19 response, as authorities warn of an alarming drop off in vaccination rates. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) found 7.2 per cent of overall health spending was focused on COVID between 2019-20 and 2021-22.

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

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Newest residents keeping oldest in town

Daily Advertiser, General News, 29/11/2023, Andrew Mangelsdorf, Page 9

A Riverina town has reopened a wing of its aged care centre after years of closure thanks to a major staffing boost. Coolamon hailed the arrival of eight aged care workers from the Philippines last week.

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Cathy said her brother's death was 'appalling'. Now other NSW patients like him can ask to die

9News, Other, 28/11/2023, Sarah Swain

Cathy Barry, 67, describes her brother's death from cancer as "appalling". Barry, from Ballina in NSW's north, said despite the care of doctors, Tom was ?"

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Woman in her 90s dies in hospital following alleged sexual assault in Bateau Bay nursing home

ABC Online, Other, 28/11/2023, Keira Proust and Mary-Louise Vince

An elderly woman has died in hospital after allegedly being sexually assaulted in a nursing home on

the New South Wales Central Coast almost two weeks ago. The woman, aged in her 90s, was taken to hospital suffering serious injuries after the alleged assault.

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The 'seismic shift' in aged care and how to navigate the 24/7 nurse staffing mandate

Nursing Review, Other, 28/11/2023

Following the federal government's new 24/7 nursing requirement, aged care providers must adopt a multi-faceted approach to staffing and training. The new laws which have forced the closure of at least 16 facilities across Australia have created a "seismic shift" in the industry, which now needs to adapt to new ways of working while simultaneously dealing with the ongoing issue of attracting and retaining workers.

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Woman, 90, dies in hospital after alleged rape at NSW aged care facility two weeks ago

The Guardian, Other, 28/11/2023

A 90-year-old woman has died in hospital following an alleged rape at an aged care facility on the Central Coast earlier this month. New South Wales police alleged a man broke into the aged-care home at Bateau Bay about 12.40am on 15 November before attacking the woman.

[Read More](#)

Elderly woman, 90, dies after alleged sexual assaulted at aged care facility

West Australian, Other, 28/11/2023, Jordan McCarthy

An elderly woman has died after she was allegedly sexually assaulted at an aged care facility. The woman, 90, was allegedly attacked on November 15.

[Read More](#)

4BC, Afternoons, 28/11/2023, Sofie Formica

Interview with Chris Grice, CEO, National Seniors Australia, regarding new data from NSA revealing the impact a lack of affordable and age-appropriate housing is having on older Australians. The Suitable Housing in Later Life report shows housing affordability is plaguing 65% of people 50 and older. Around 45% are living in homes unsuitable for later life because they're too big, they need costly modifications or security. Grice says they need the Federal Government to look at the issue seriously.

Interview continues on: [4BC \(Brisbane\)](#).

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POPULATION HEALTH

Definition in dispute, but not the benefits . the rest is history

The Australian, General News, 29/11/2023, Elle Halliwell, Page 12

Anyone for whom insomnia is an unfortunate bedfellow understands why the quest for shut-eye has spawned a multibillion-dollar global industry. But, while the benefits of a good night's sleep are common knowledge, many of us tend to view rest as a pleasure reserved for those recuperating from illness or suffering from a lack of motivation.

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Let's talk openly about menopause

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 29/11/2023, Grace Molloy, Page 21

It's not an illness, it's an inevitable stage of life for all women and organisations need to embrace it. Menopause is having a moment.

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Kid vape crackdown

Herald Sun, Editorials, 29/11/2023, Page 22

Having saved and extended so many lives in younger generations through intensive anti-smoking campaigns over past decades, the threat cannot now be allowed to return. Whether it be the health concerns raised over vaping, or the introduction to nicotine addiction and gateway to cigarettes that vaping presents, every effort must be made to stem its take-up.

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12 and pregnant

West Australian, General News, 29/11/2023, Rebecca Le May, Page 1

Carnarvon is in the grip of a teenage pregnancy crisis with girls as young as 12 about to become mothers. After 11 local 14-year-olds gave birth over the past year, town officials used a recent visit by MP Reece Whitby to highlight the shocking surge and issued a plea for State Government help.

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Sorry to contrarians, but turns out cancer experts are right

West Australian, General News, 29/11/2023, Kate Emery, Page 13

Bad news for anyone approaching the festive season with a burger in one hand and a pint in the other, safe in the knowledge that official health advice is so contradictory, confusing and ever-changing that it's impossible to know what to believe anymore. After all, the "experts" once thought leeches and lobotomies were a cure-all so you'll be taking your advice from the guy on TikTok who tells you what you want to hear, thanks very much: he's got an eight-pack and access to a ring-light so he seems legit.

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Stats show Tasmania has had greatest decrease in birth rate in the country

Burnie Advocate, General News, 29/11/2023, Stephanie Dalton, Page 6

Tasmania's birth rate is near historic lows and there are signs it will fall further unless more can be done to support new mothers. The baby drought is noticeable across the country, but Tasmania has seen the most significant decrease in birth rate in the past year. [...] According to the latest report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the fertility rate in Tasmania slumped to 1.49 in 2022, a fraction of the 2.1 "replacement level" rate needed for a stable population, not including migration.

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Many factors producing 'baby drought'

Launceston Examiner, General News, 29/11/2023, Stephanie Dalton, Page 2

Tasmania's birth rate is near historic lows and there are signs it will fall further unless more can be done to support new mothers. [...] According to the latest report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), the fertility rate in Tasmania slumped to 1.49 in 2022, a fraction of the 2.1 "replacement level" rate needed for a stable population, not including migration.

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Antibiotic resistance is a threat to humanity, yet we have no idea exactly how big the problem is in Australia

ABC Online, Other, 28/11/2023

A selection of pharmacists across NSW have been licensed this year to prescribe antibiotics to women suffering suspected urinary tract infections, or UTIs. The trial program mirrors similar schemes being rolled out in other states.

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How Australia's world-first crackdown on smoking - introducing plain packets and hiking them beyond \$50 - has backfired: Here's why

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 28/11/2023, Candace Sutton

Australia's world-first crackdown on smoking has had a series of unintended consequences as illegal tobacco sales reach epidemic proportions and Chinese-made disposable vapes flood the market. When the laws were introduced in 2012 by the Labor government, they were hailed as a historic win against Big Tobacco.

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Why is the health of young Australians on the decline?

SBS, Other, 28/11/2023, Sam Dover

A new national framework tracking the health and wellbeing of young people across Australia has been launched in hopes of encouraging significant improvements before 2030. The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, and the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth have joined forces, warning that the health and wellbeing of Australia's youth is on the decline.

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Too hot to handle: Women's health still taboo in Australia

The New Daily, Other, 28/11/2023, Dr Anna Finizio

It was a Thursday evening in October. I found myself at a beautifully curated "intimate" women's health event, facilitated by local businesswoman Rose Bonasera.

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Following dietary guidelines could save you \$160 a fortnight

The New Daily, Other, 28/11/2023, Lauren Ball And Emily Burch

A rise in the cost of living has led many households to look for ways to save money. New research suggests maintaining a healthy diet, in line with the Australian Dietary Guidelines, is cheaper than an unhealthy diet and could save \$160 off a family of four's fortnightly shopping bill.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Drive, 28/11/2023, Lucy Breaden

According to the latest report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the fertility rate on the national average is 1.63 births per woman but the fertility rate in Tasmania has slumped to 1.49 in 2022.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Asthma warning for today

Bendigo Advertiser, General News, 29/11/2023, Page 2

VicEmergency is forecasting a moderate risk of thunderstorm asthma for north-western and northern parts of Victoria on November 29. Thunderstorm asthma can affect those with asthma or hay fever - especially people who experience wheezing or coughing with their hay fever.

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Disabling impact of juvenile arthritis revealed

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 28/11/2023

"Every joint in my body aches and every muscle," she told health experts gathered at NSW parliament on Tuesday. "It's rare for me to have a full week at school," Laura, who was diagnosed with juvenile arthritis at the age of nine, says the chronic condition means she often travels up to 500km at a time to meet with different specialists.

Many cancer patients suffer skin side-effects: here's what you can do to help

The Guardian, Other, 28/11/2023

During her fight against Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2003, Australian musician Delta Goodrem would habitually stop by her local plant nursery to buy herself a cup of hot chocolate. To Goodrem, who was just 18 at the time, having something comforting to regularly look forward to became an important part of her fight against cancer.

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Cervical cancer survivor's self-screening test warning

West Australian, Other, 29/11/2023, Rachael Ward

The number of Victorians testing themselves for cervical cancer has soared, with the uptake higher in regional and disadvantaged areas. Strict rules about who could self-administer swabs changed in July 2022 and over the following 12 months 45,474 tests were done.

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PRIMARY CARE

Woman's leg amputated after ambulance wait

Age, General News, 29/11/2023, Aisha Dow, Page 3

Ambulance Victoria has apologised after a woman waited about four hours for an ambulance while she suffered pain in her leg that later had to be amputated. Marianne Maher, of Haddon near Ballarat, said that two weeks ago she had woken up with no feeling in her right foot, describing it as "dead looking".

Also reported by: [7news.com.au](https://www.7news.com.au) ([Online](#)).

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Ambo delay cost my leg

Herald Sun, Edition Changes, 29/11/2023, Emily Dann, Page 14

A Victorian mother has been forced to have her leg amputated after waiting more than four hours for paramedics to arrive. Marianne Maher, from Ballarat, woke with severe pain in her right leg two weeks ago, having to crawl to her lounge room for help after falling out of bed.

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Fight to save medical centre grows

Burnie Advocate, General News, 29/11/2023, Libby Bingham, Page 1

Worried East Devonport residents say they are concerned about the health of many vulnerable patients if the only East Devonport GP clinic closes. It comes as a petition is launched calling for joint government action to prevent the East Devonport Medical Centre (EDMC) from shutting in February.

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River views at \$30m Wentworth hospital

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 29/11/2023, Page 3

Wentworth's new hospital will be designed so that all inpatient rooms have views of the Darling River, it's been revealed, as work starts on the New South Wales site. The contractor managing the project was also announced at a symbolic sod-turning ceremony next to the existing hospital yesterday.

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Voluntary assisted dying will be legal in NSW from today. Mark wants the choice to end his life

This morning, Mark Butler will call his doctor and make a simple request to die with dignity. Sitting in his wheelchair in his brick 1970s apartment in Sydney, Mark has spent months counting down the days to November 28.

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Pharmacy prescribing trial widens to include skin conditions

Australian Doctor, Other, 28/11/2023, Sarah Simpkins

Four more health issues are to be added to the NSW pharmacy trial, with specific medications still being worked out. NSW Minister for Health Ryan Park has confirmed that the state's pharmacy trial will be expanded to allow pharmacists to prescribe treatments for four skin conditions including shingles.

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Podiatric surgeon 'loophole' putting patients at risk

Australian Doctor, Other, 28/11/2023, Carmel Sparke

The AMA is calling for a ban on podiatrists calling themselves a surgeon' warning patients could be misled into believing they are being operated on by an orthopaedic surgeon. Podiatric surgeons are podiatrists who are allowed to perform procedures such as hallux valgus corrections and reconstructive surgery of the foot and ankle, despite not having a medical degree

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Co-pay cut the real saving

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 28/11/2023

Australians are on track to save a quarter of a billion dollars on their medicines in 2023, analysis by the Federal Govt has revealed. The cost of prescription medicines was lowered to \$30 in Jan from \$42.50 in the largest cut to the co-payment in the 75-year history of the PBS (PD 23 Nov 2022).

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NSW becomes final state to legalise voluntary assisted dying for terminally ill people

SBS, Other, 28/11/2023, Aleisha Orr

Laws have now come into effect that will legalise voluntary assisted dying in NSW, the last Australian state to do so. People with a terminal illness in NSW are now able to apply to end their life via voluntary assisted dying.

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Surge in NSW vape retailers, as more than 600 stores join trade before federal crackdown

The Guardian, Other, 29/11/2023, Melissa Davey

More than 600 additional shops began selling vape products in New South Wales in the first half of 2023, a drastic increase that occurred despite the federal government announcing tough reforms that will ban sales from convenience stores. The sharp rise comes despite laws that dictate that the only legal way to buy nicotine-containing vapes is from a pharmacist with a prescription from a doctor.

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Victoria expands abortion services to more public hospitals to improve accessibility

The Guardian, Other, 29/11/2023, Benita Kolovos

Every day, Carolyn Mogharbel takes calls from distressed women facing hours-long journeys to Melbourne in order to access a surgical abortion. Experts such as Mogharbel, a manager at the 1800 My Options program that provides free advice about reproductive health services, have said access to abortion in Victoria largely depends on where a woman lives.

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How does Australia's health system stack up internationally? Not bad, if you're willing to wait for it

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 28/11/2023, Stephen Duckett

When things are going bad in the health system, we are reassured we've got one of the best health systems in the world. But we're rarely told where we actually stand relative to others.

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ABC News, News Breakfast, 28/11/2023, Lisa Millar and Emma Rebellato

NSW has become the latest Australian state to allow voluntary assisted dying. Eligible patients must have an illness that's expected to cause death within 6 or 12 months if it's a neurodegenerative disease. Patients must also have decision-making capacity and be able to make the decision without coercion.

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Channel 9, Today, 28/11/2023, Karl Stefanovic, Sarah Abo, Alex Cullen, and Brooke Boney

Gold Coast patients have had to wait almost an hour in ambulances as Qld's ramping crisis continues to plague the state. One patient even waited an hour and 45 minutes to get from the stretcher to inside the Gold Coast University Hospital. The Qld Government pledged \$20m on Friday to address the statewide problem after two people have died waiting.

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ABC Radio Adelaide, Breakfast, 28/11/2023, Stacey Lee and Nikolai Beilharz

Legal experts say the next biggest barrier to voluntary assisted dying access is national laws prohibiting telehealth. Euthanasia is now legal in NSW from today under strict eligibility criteria. The Commonwealth Criminal Code, however, stops the use of telehealth and all electronic internet to provide voluntary assisted dying, including emailing a prescription for a life-ending drug.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Millennials bear brunt

Herald Sun, General News, 29/11/2023, Page 14

Millennials are driving the apparent deterioration in mental health in Australia, according to research that has tracked Aussie mental health over 20 years. The University of Sydney-led study found deteriorating mental health was particularly pronounced among people born in the 1990s and to a lesser extent in the 1980s.

Also reported by: [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [The Guardian \(Online\)](#), [The New Daily \(Online\)](#).

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Bucks kicks in for blokes

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 29/11/2023, Rishab Jain, Page 17

The 18th annual Movember Gentlemen of Geelong Luncheon was attended by AFL legend Nathan Buckley on Friday to promote awareness of men's mental health and suicide prevention. Around 200 "hairy men" came together at Flying Brick Cider House, where radio personality and raconteur Ian Cover interviewed Geelong Cats chief operating officer Simon Kelleher and player Rhys Stanley.

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Funding boost to support state veterans

Ex-serving Australians often struggle with mental ill health and find it difficult to get the assistance and support they need when they return from conflict, according to the latest report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). The AIHW report found that, on average, ex-serving males were 26 per cent more likely to die by suicide than Australian males, while ex-serving females were more than twice as likely (107 per cent more likely) to die by suicide than Australian females.

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WELL in the Wheatbelt campaign launches to improve mental health in outback WA

ABC Online, Other, 28/11/2023

From workplace accidents to road deaths and drought, there is no shortage of tragedy in Western Australia's outback. Just two weeks ago two people died in a road crash near Corrigin, and a 22-year-old farm worker was killed in a quad bike accident in Dandaragan last month.

[Read More](#)

NSW government wants suicide prevention legislation 'owned by the people'

The Guardian, Other, 29/11/2023, Catie Mcleod

The New South Wales government says it wants its proposed suicide prevention legislation to be "owned by people with lived experience of mental ill health" as experts say they hope it will compel agencies to protect vulnerable people. The state's mental health minister, Rose Jackson, said the Minns government would in 2025 follow through on its election commitment to introduce a suicide prevention bill to parliament.

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Hobart, Statewide Mornings, 28/11/2023, Leon Compton

A study of different age groups has found people born in the 1990s have poorer mental health for their age than any previous generation. Led by the University of Sydney, the research tracked the mental health of more than 27,000 Australians.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Nurse banned over drugs

Hobart Mercury, General News, 29/11/2023, Amber Wilson, Page 3

A nurse working at Burnie's North West Regional Hospital has been deregistered for sticking syringes in bags of fentanyl, and self-administering the powerful painkiller on days when she was "struggling". In a decision published this month, the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal found Esther Chivinda had behaved in a way that constituted professional misconduct, reprimanding her and cancelling her registration as a nurse.

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Unpaid placements a barrier for many

Burnie Advocate, General News, 29/11/2023, Jess Flint, Page 7

Enrolled nurse Kelli Horch has always wanted to upskill and train as a registered nurse but taking on

the course knowing she would have to spend weeks on unpaid placement was tough decision for the young mother-of-two to make. Mrs Horch said she was able to make it through the unpaid placements with the support of her husband, but she knows many other would-be nurses who aren't in the position to train.

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

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

Nurses suffering serious rental stress across the country

Nursing Review, Other, 28/11/2023

A new map has illustrated the depths of Australia's rental crisis, with many essential workers no longer being able to afford rent in any part of the country. Anglicare's new heat map shows the areas in which essential workers, such as nurses and teachers, are suffering rental stress the most.

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Healthcare disgrace

Herald Sun, General News, 29/11/2023, Sarah Booth, Page 8

A hospital that sent a child in need of emergency surgery home, a business claiming to cure cancer and a cosmetic clinic's refund dispute were among more than 5700 complaints made to Victoria's healthcare watchdog last financial year. [...] A different regulator the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency typically investigates cases involving registered healthcare practitioners.

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

Alarming figures reveal rise in violence at Perth Children's Hospital despite focus on improving safety

West Australian, Other, 28/11/2023, Josh Zimmerman

There were 13 reports of violence against young patients at Perth Children's Hospital's notorious Ward 5A in the past 12 months nearly triple the previous year. That was despite a concerted focus on improving safety following the horrifying alleged rape of a 13-year-old girl in the specialist mental health unit January 2022.

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Pharmacy mistake 'almost kills' elderly Aussie woman leaving daughter devastated

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 28/11/2023, Carly Bass

A devastated woman has watched helplessly as her mother's health "deteriorates", unable to walk or eat on her own and forced into a nursing home. The reason, according to Lisa Carratelli, is because of a "significant" pharmacy blunder which saw her mother overdose on her medication, resulting in the need for round-the-clock care after it "nearly killed her".

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

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SPORT

2032 Games must leave a legacy for swimming

Courier Mail, General News, 29/11/2023, Mark Stockwell, Page 37

Brisbane will host a great Olympics and Paralympics. We're just sorry there's no Olympic and Paralympic pool of dreams anywhere for you to swim in or for those who follow you.

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Concussion myths putting kids at risk

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 29/11/2023, Sarah Booth, Page 5

Australian parents are misinformed on concussion, with half unaware of a common symptom and thousands allowing kids to keep playing sport after a head knock. Almost 30 per cent of parents surveyed by the Royal Children's Hospital national child health poll wrongly believe concussions always involve blacking out, while more than half did not know treatment existed.

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Lessons on concussion

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 29/11/2023, Brooke Doherty, Page 20

Concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury. It can happen after contact to the head or if the head is shaken.

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Xavier Wilson lines up to compete in the 2032 Paralympic Games after smashing national school records

ABC Online, Other, 28/11/2023, Brooke Chandler

Eleven-year-old Xavier Wilson is certain about two things his mad passion for sport, and competing at the 2032 Brisbane Paralympic Games as a legally blind athlete. He is well on his way after returning from this week's 2023 School Sport Australia Track and Field Championships in Launceston where he broke records and earned a neck full of track and field medals for the second year in a row.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Wash-up on toxic plastic

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 29/11/2023, Michaela Meade, Page 10

Reducing the amount of harmful microplastics in the air we breathe and food we eat is the dream of a world-first research project out of Waurn Ponds. Researchers at the ARC Research Hub for Future Fibres in Deakin University's Institute for Frontier Materials (IFM) have teamed with Simba Global, a global textile manufacturing and supply company, to investigate the extent and type of microplastics shed when its products are laundered.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Victoria's peak Aboriginal health organisation announces new Board members

National Indigenous Times, Other, 28/11/2023, Giovanni Torre

The Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation announced the appointments of Paula Morgan and Simon Flagg to the VACCHO Board on Tuesday, following last week's Annual General Meeting in Melbourne. The AGM also saw the re-election of proud Dja Dja Wurrung, Yorta Yorta, Waywurru and Wiradjuri man and Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) CEO Michael Graham as VACCHO Chairperson.

[Read More](#)

COVID-19 cases in the NT a worry for Indigenous health group

National Indigenous Times, Other, 28/11/2023, Dechlan Brennan

As an eighth wave of COVID-19 sweeps across Australia there has been a sharp rise in the number of people contracting the virus in the Northern Territory. Whilst reporting of the COVID-19 through Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) is no longer mandatory, the NT Centre for Disease Control has been notified of more than 500 cases over the most recent four-week period, mostly in Darwin, East Arnhem and Katherine regions.

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OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

InstantScripts fined \$742k for medicine ads

Australian Financial Review, Companies and Markets, 29/11/2023, Jessica Sier, Page 22

The national medical board has fined a Wesfarmers-backed "instant" telehealth start-up for unlawfully advertising prescription-only medications on its popular website. Melbourne-based InstantScripts has been fined \$742,500 by the Therapeutic Goods Associa...

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

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'Wonder drug' survivors to get apology

Age, General News, 29/11/2023, Natassia Chrysanthos, Page 12

It was the pregnancy wonder drug that promised Australian women in the early 1960s a quick fix for their side effects an over-the-counter cure-all for everything from morning sickness to insomnia. But soon after, babies were born with shortened or absent limbs, blindness, deafness or malformed internal organs. [...] It eventually spawned the Therapeutic Goods Administration, the agency now charged with ensuring medicines in Australia are of the highest standards.

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

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Bacteria cases spread

At least six Queenslanders are expected to have been infected with waterborne bacterium *Ralstonia*, chief health officer John Gerrard says. So far 43 cases have been reported across the country, including three confirmed and three probable cases in Queensland.

Also reported by: [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [The Guardian \(Online\)](#), [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#).

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Tassie infections suspected from saline

Hobart Mercury, General News, 29/11/2023, Duncan Abey, Page 3

The Tasmanian government has issued an urgent alert to healthcare service providers over a contaminated saline product, after five cases of the potentially dangerous *Ralstonia pickettii* bacteria were confirmed in the state. The move comes as more than 40 suspected infections have been recorded across Australia, one of which is reported to have resulted in a man's death in Queensland. The Health Department said that in line with the latest Therapeutic Goods Administration alert, it had asked Tasmanian medicos to pause the use of the InterPharma products until further notice.

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Alert after bacteria outbreak at hospitals

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 29/11/2023, Page 12

A bacterial outbreak in hospitals around the nation has been linked to more than 40 people, including an elderly patient who died in Queensland. Australia's medical watchdog has issued a quarantine notice for saline products which appear to be contaminated with *Ralstonia* - a form of bacteria normally found in soil and water.

Also reported by: [Western Advocate \(Bathurst\)](#), [Central Western Daily \(Orange\)](#), [Daily Liberal \(Dubbo\)](#).

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Anti-depressant shortage flagged

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 28/11/2023

Manufacturing issues have hit some fluoxetine supplies says TGA Fluoxetine 20 mg dispersible tablets under the brand Zactin Tabs are in short supply and like to remain so until the end of February 2024, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has announced. It said the shortage of fluoxetine, an antidepressant used to treat major depression, obsessive-compulsive

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'Market is going to be surprised,' says Firebrick as it prepares launch antiviral nasal spray

The Courier Mail, Other, 28/11/2023, Eddy Sunarto

Firebrick's share price surged by 100 per cent last week on news about its antiviral nasal spray, as ASX stocks chase a potentially \$US90 billion market. [...] The doomed 2023 trial followed a similar trial conducted in 2019, where Firebrick's Phase 3 trial on common cold failed to get approval from the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), despite results showing a positive therapeutic effect on patients.

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

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ABC News, News Breakfast, 28/11/2023, Lisa Millar and Emma Rebellato

Hospitals and clinics right across Qld have been told to stop using two Interpharma sodium chloride products for patient care immediately over suspicions they could be contaminated and linked to a patient death on the Sunshine Coast. The Therapeutic Goods Administration issued an urgent quarantine notice for those two products.

Also reported by: [ABC Radio Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#).

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Channel 7, Seven News, 28/11/2023, Peter Mitchell

Victorian health facilities are on guard over a medical saline product that's proven deadly. It's been immediately pulled from shelves after an elderly patient died from a solution tainted with dangerous bacteria. Qld Chief Health Officer Dr John Gerrard says the Therapeutic Goods Administration will be looking at it nationally.

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OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

Medical cannabis doubling revenues

Australian Financial Review, Features, 29/11/2023, Simon Evans, Page 9

Health Cannatrek says it's committed to making plantbased medicines accessible to all, writes Simon Evans. Tommy Huppert, the chief executive of fast-growing medicinal cannabis company Cannatrek, says the industry has come a long way in seven years, but t...

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PD breaking news – Ban on imports of single-use vapes to come into force on 01 Jan

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 28/11/2023

Govt to allow nurse practitioners and all medical practitioners to prescribe vapes for therapeutic use. From 01 Jan 2024, the Federal Govt will implement a ban on the importation of disposable single-use vapes, subject to legislative and administrative arrangements being approved, including by the Governor-General in the Federal Executive Council.

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NSW drug law overhaul would allow six marijuana plants for personal use

The Guardian, Other, 29/11/2023, Tamsin Rose and Catie McLeod

People would be allowed to grow six marijuana plants for personal use and give their friends pot as a gift under a proposed law being introduced to the New South Wales parliament on Wednesday, as the government comes under more pressure to enact drug reform. The legislation would also allow people to carry up to 50g of cannabis, in a change that Legalise Cannabis MP Jeremy Buckingham hopes would reduce the number of Aboriginal people caught under laws he believes are racist.

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