



TODAY'S NEWS

Tuesday, 12th December 2023

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Australian \(page 1\)](#)** reports that a major behavioural research project gauging the mood of Victorians in regard to the state's COVID-19 restrictions and lockdown has been released under Freedom of Information laws, with the research being conducted prior to the “roadmap to freedom” which the state government had previously argued was guided by health advice.
- The **[Australian Financial Review \(page 1\)](#)** reports that the federal government's Aged Care Taskforce has published a poll suggesting Australians would be willing to pay between 30 to 40 per cent of service costs for aged care services. Aged Care Minister Anika Wells will meet with the task force for the final time on Friday.
- **[The Age \(page 1\)](#)** reports that the state coroner has called on the AFL to empower concussion spotters and independent medical practitioners to remove players from the field to curb the risk of significant head trauma to them following an investigation into the death of a former Richmond player. *Also reported by Age, The Sydney Morning Herald.*
- The **[Sydney Morning Herald \(page 1\)](#)** reports that property developers Lendlease and Mirvac have backed a national ban on engineered stone after a Safe Work Australia report found that

no levels of crystalline silica were safe and could cause irreversible lung conditions. Also reported by Age, The Sydney Morning Herald.

- **[The Australian \(page 5\)](#)** reports that religious leaders are concerned about the ACT's proposed assisted suicide laws which are to become the most liberal in Australia. The concerns are that there will be inadequate protections for conscientious objectors and that the eligibility will be by diagnosis rather than individual assessment.
- **[The Guardian \(online\)](#)** reports an increasing number of prospective mental health patients in Victoria are using a brokerage service to secure a bed in a private hospital amidst a shortage of inpatient beds, clinicians and staff.
- **[The ABC \(online\)](#)** reports that the Australian Research Integrity Committee will investigate the UNSW after the university spent two years conducting its preliminary assessment of allegations surrounding scientists in the university's Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing (CHeBA).

MINISTER BUTLER

New clinic's hours not what was promised

Burnie Advocate, General News, 12/12/2023, Libby Bingham, Page 3

The Coast's first bulk-billed urgent care clinic (UCC) in Devonport has opened its doors on December 11 after a delay of about six months. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler's spokesperson said that in some cases, UCCs may operate for reduced hours during the initial phase.

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

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Grindr set to promote HIV self tests in grand plan to eradicate the virus

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 11/12/2023, Kieran Rooney

Dating app Grindr is on board to promote the widespread use of HIV self-tests similar to COVID rapid tests which are now as cheap as \$20 and could help eradicate the disease in Australia by 2030. [...] Responding to the release of the HIV Taskforce report, federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the country had a bipartisan history of leading the response to the HIV pandemic.

Also reported by: [WA Today \(Online\)](#), [The Age \(Online\)](#), [Brisbane Times \(Online\)](#).

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Health Equity Matters CEO steps down

Hospital and Healthcare, Other, 11/12/2023

Adjunct Professor Darryl O'Donnell is stepping down as CEO of Health Equity Matters after leading the organisation for eight years.[...] "Among his many achievements, Darryl has most recently helped shape the work of the HIV Taskforce chaired by the Hon Mark Butler MP and the LGBTIQ+ Health Ten Year Action Plan chaired by Assistant Minister the Hon Ged Kearney MP.

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A COVID Christmas is coming – are we resilient enough to ride the wave?

RiotACT, Other, 11/12/2023, John Blackburn and Anne Borzycki

Is the current media reporting about the increasing COVID cases leading into the festive season something to cause the average Australian any concern? [...] Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler, as recently as 21 November, acknowledged one of the big challenges facing our healthcare system the very real workforce shortage.

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Interest spikes as new COVID-19 vaccines land

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 11/12/2023

Supplies are due to arrive in general practices this week, with GPs seeing a significant upturn in

patients wishing to get boosted. [...] Federal Health and Aged Care Minister Mark Butler said the vaccines, with one developed by Moderna and the other by Pfizer, will be available mid-way through this month.

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3AW, Mornings, 11/12/2023, Neil Mitchell

Interview with Robert Tickner, Co-Chair, EveryAGE Counts, regarding ageism. Tickner says a recent survey showed that 68% of people over 50 agree that ageism is a serious problem in Australia and it has quite an impact. He adds it also showed that a lot of older people walk into a shop and often they are kind of the last to be served. Tickner says Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler gave a speech in Adelaide earlier this year and highlighted his experience with one of his constituents who just felt that as she got older she became invisible.

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MINISTER WELLS

Appetite for user pays as aged care costs rise

Australian Financial Review, General News, 12/12/2023, Phillip Coorey, Page 1

The Albanese government is softening up voters for increased aged care fees for those who can afford it, by citing polling that claims people are eager to pay up to 40 per cent of the cost.

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

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Australian Olympic chief backs 'groundbreaking' AIS to stay in Canberra

Canberra Times, Other, 11/12/2023, Melanie Dinjaski

The Australian Olympic Committee has thrown its support behind keeping the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra, as a review into its future is expected to be completed soon. An independent report commissioned by the federal government is due to be delivered to Infrastructure Minister Catherine King and Sport Minister Anika Wells by the end of the year, examining existing AIS facilities, the funding desperately needed to improve the site, as well as a potential \$1 billion relocation to south-east Queensland.

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Thousands to miss out on improved home care program

The Advocate (Burnie), Other, 11/12/2023, Eileen Wood

Hundreds of thousands of vulnerable older Australians will be excluded from the federal government's much vaunted Support at Home Program until at least mid-2027. Aged Care Minister Anika Wells said the new program will now be delivered in two stages with Home Care Package and Short-Term Restorative Care Program recipients moving to the new upgraded program on July 1, 2025 but Commonwealth Home Support Program recipients will have to wait at least a further two years.

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Aged care minister applauds "ambitious reforms" but aged cares continue to struggle

Aged Care Insite, Other, 11/12/2023, Arshmah Jamal

Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells has commended the Albanese Government's "ambitious" aged care reforms despite facilities struggling to reach mandates. The latest Aged Care Quarterly Financial Snapshot (QFS) reported an increase of four minutes compared to last quarter, with residential aged care providers delivering care on an average of 194 minutes per resident.

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Aged care reforms delivering for older Australians

Starts at 60, Other, 11/12/2023, Matthew Hart

In a heartening development for Australia's aged care residents, the Albanese Government's aged care reforms are already yielding remarkable results, as revealed in the latest Aged Care Quarterly Financial Snapshot (QFS). [...] Buoyed by the success of the recent reforms, Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells anticipates "continued improvements" in the aged care sector, fostering a positive trajectory for the well-being of older Australians and the dedicated caregivers supporting them.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

New mental health service opens in Sunshine

Star Weekly, Other, 11/12/2023

A new children's mental health centre has officially opened in Sunshine, one of three new hubs that will provide free mental health support to kids in Victoria. Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt and Federal Assistant Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Minister Emma McBride opened the three new Children's Health and Wellbeing Locals on December 8, forming part of the national network of Head to Health Kids services being delivered across Australia.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCCARTHY

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DEPARTMENT

Coroner calls for sweeping AFL concussion changes after death of Shane Tuck

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 11/12/2023, Erin Pearson

The AFL is being urged to slash the number of full contact training sessions before the 2025 pre-season as part of extensive concussion changes recommended by a coroner investigating the death of former Richmond player Shane Tuck. State Coroner John Cain on Monday called on the AFL to limit the risk of significant head trauma to players, during both the on and off season, in the men's and women's games. [...] Cain said the federal health department should also fund brain banks nationally.

Also reported by: [WA Today \(Online\)](#), [Brisbane Times \(Online\)](#), [The Age \(Online\)](#).

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Care minute error affects most homes

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 11/12/2023, Natasha Egan

Published care minute targets for this quarter have changed for most residential aged care services including by more than a minute for 41 per cent of services, the Department of Health and Aged Care

has told Australian Ageing Agenda. That comes to over 1,000 of the country's 2,600-plus residential services.

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Australians are encouraged to have a 'COVID-safe Christmas': Here's how to do so

SBS, Other, 11/12/2023, Svetlana Printcev

Here are tips for spreading joy and gifts this Christmas season, not viruses. Australia's Chief Health Officer has warned of rising COVID-19 cases ahead of festive season, urging precautions. [...] COVID-19 vaccinations and testing The Australian Health Department's advice remains the same: to receive the best protection against serious illness or death from COVID-19, you should get all recommended doses for your age or individual health needs of vaccines.

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2GB, 14:00 News, 11/12/2023

Antibiotics, painkillers and antidepressants are among the 446 medicines affected by shortages and discontinuations. The Department of Health and Aged Care and Therapeutic Goods Administration said 40 critical medicines are included in that list, such as common antibiotics, ampicillin and rifampin, morphine for daily pain relief and most often used to relieve radiation and chemotherapy symptoms are also in limited supply.

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ABC Goldfields WA, Breakfast, 11/12/2023, Ivo Da Silva

Report on fears the Royal Flying Doctor Service is being overused to prop up inadequate rural healthcare. A Federal Department of Health and Aged Care spokesperson said it was investing in the healthcare workforce by tripling Medicare bulk billing initiatives, increasing funding to help GPs hire health practitioners and launching a two-year trial program for international medical graduates. The spokesperson said it was expanding an employment pathway for junior doctors and wanted to be rural generalists, funding a new primary care nurse and midwifery scholarship program and investing in a strategy to entice former nurses back to the workforce.

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ABC Newcastle, Mornings , 11/12/2023, Paul Turton

Interview with Camilla Rowland, Chief Executive Officer, Palliative Care Australia, regarding a new report finding that hospitalisations are increasing continuously. Rowland says they anticipated that the situation would become worse because the country is expected to have double the number of people who are ageing in Australia by 2050. She adds more investment across Australia is needed from states, territories and the national Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care to ensure that everybody can access good quality palliative care.

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CORONAVIRUS

Dan's secret post-Covid public quiz

The Australian, General News, 12/12/2023, Damon Johnston, Page 1

Cabinet documents reveal the Andrews government grilled Victorians about which pandemic restrictions they would "really like to see go" in the months before and after Daniel Andrews released his roadmap out of lockdown. In revelations raising fresh questions about the former premier's repeated claims that his government's world-record 267 days of lockdown were guided by health advice and science, the documents confirm detailed "mood and concerns" research of Victorians was ordered.

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

Official in lockdown profiling of citizens

The Australian, General News, 12/12/2023, Damon Johnston, Page 2

A senior Andrews government bureaucrat described Victorians who were opposed to Covid-19 lockdowns as believing "tyrannical government is the enemy", embracing "fantastical conspiracy theories" and choosing "individual rights" ahead of "collective rights". The scathing assessment of what the bureaucrat conceded covered a "lot of people" was included in an email that profiled Victorians into five categories based on their response to pandemic restrictions.

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

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China pneumonia outbreak: Top UK doctor says it could be another type of Covid

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 11/12/2023, Maria Bervanakis

A top UK doctor says a mystery disease causing a surge in child pneumonia cases in China and parts of Europe could be a form of Covid. The outbreak, dubbed "white lung syndrome" because of how the lung damage shows up on scans, was first reported in China and has since spread to Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden.

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

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Is Australia facing another Covid Christmas peak?

The Border Mail, Other, 11/12/2023, Jessica Coates

Australia is facing a third-straight year of a Covid-19 Christmas peak, the latest health data has revealed. According to NSW Health statistics, the state was experiencing "moderate to high levels" of infection with sewage detections continuing to increase.

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ABC News, News Breakfast, 11/12/2023, Lisa Millar and Bridget Brennan

Interview with Nancy Baxter, Head, Melbourne University School of Population and Global Health, on new vaccines that are being rolled out today to help target mutations of COVID-19. It comes as Australia is facing a third straight year of the cases peaking at Christmas time. Baxter says hospitalisations are up across Australia and the number of cases in aged care and the number of people dying are up as well.

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Radio National, Breakfast, 11/12/2023, Patricia Karvelas / Hamish Macdonald

A new COVID-19 vaccine is available from pharmacies across the country from today. It was approved in October and can be used for both primary vaccinations and boosters. Pharmacy Guild of Australia President Trent Twomey says it will better target the new COVID variant currently circulating in the community.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Support for dementia

Hobart Mercury, General News, 12/12/2023, Grace Baldwin, Page 6

Free, accessible courses about dementia will be upgraded thanks to a funding boost to the dedicated dementia education centre in Tasmania. Offering university-quality education about dementia care and

research, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are set to be sponsored by Dementia Training Australia.

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Understanding dementia care

Hobart Mercury, Editorials, 12/12/2023, Page 14

As medical advancements constantly reshape the landscape of healthcare, one area that demands urgent attention is dementia care and research. As the global population ages, the prevalence of dementia is reaching unprecedented levels, making it imperative to invest in education focused on understanding, managing, and ultimately finding a cure for this debilitating condition.

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Business out to revolutionise aged care

Daily Advertiser, General News, 12/12/2023, Dan Holmes, Page 5

Aged care in the regions has been a wicked problem for successive governments. Inquiries into the aged care system have found a lack of qualified staff has driven worsening health and wellbeing for the aged and ageing. Now, a group of former healthcare workers in Wagga want to revolutionise the industry.

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Former Oakden nursing manager who 'ought to have known' about 'appalling abuse' of patients hit with 10-year ban

ABC Online, Other, 11/12/2023, Rory McClaren

A former nursing manager who worked at an Adelaide aged care facility that was closed down after abuse and neglect of patients was uncovered, has been banned from practising for a decade. Julie Harrison held a number of managerial roles at the Oakden nursing home

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Plenty of lessons to be learnt at this playgroup, where it doesn't matter if you're one or 101

ABC Online, Other, 11/12/2023, Sarah Krieg

On a quiet, mild Monday morning in north-eastern Victoria, aged care residents make their way into the common area at Myrtleford Lodge. Some are on foot, assisted by sticks and walkers, others are wheeled in chairs or on beds by staff. As they get comfortable, their visitors begin arriving and faces around the room light up.

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How to navigate the 24/7 nurse staffing mandate

Aged Care Insite, Other, 11/12/2023, Cameron Fancourt

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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POPULATION HEALTH

NT Police deny that a summer crime strategy to remove kids off the street is a curfew

The Courier Mail, Other, 11/12/2023, Zizi Averill

Territory kids enjoying their holiday evenings may be questioned by police in a move cops have denied

is a summer curfew'. The latest statistics from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare show incidences of child protection notifications or investigations are up to five times higher in the Northern Territory than in other states around

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Legislation passed

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 11/12/2023

The Australian Govt has passed the Public Health (Tobacco and Other Products) Bill 2023, placing the nation as a world leader in tobacco and vaping control. The Bill consolidates and modernises existing laws and introduces new approaches to discourage smoking.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Ozempic a heart healer

Daily Telegraph, General News, 12/12/2023, Robyn Riley, Page 9

Weight loss drugs such as Ozempic and Trulicity may be "super drugs" that also protect the heart and kidneys in people with diabetes and those who are overweight or obese. A team of Aussie scientists from Monash University has, for the first time, shown how the drugs directly act to reduce injury-causing inflammation that can lead to deadly heart and kidney disease.

Also reported by: [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#).

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High teen BMI link to disease

Hobart Mercury, General News, 12/12/2023, Page 3

Having a higher BMI as a teen could increase your risk of developing chronic kidney disease early in life, according to international research. The Sheba Medical Centre team in Israel looked at health data from more than 600,000 Israeli people as teenagers and who went on to develop chronic kidney disease before the age of 45. They say being obese or overweight as a teen was associated with a higher kidney disease risk.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#).

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Why AI will diagnose breast cancer in Australia by 2028

Canberra Times, Other, 11/12/2023, Nyk Carnsew

From cancer screening to detecting scams, artificial intelligence technology is being deployed in ways Australians probably don't expect or realise. The far-reaching application of the emerging technology has been explored at a meeting of business leaders representing major companies, including Telstra, the Commonwealth Bank and Amazon in Sydney.

Also reported by: [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [The Senior \(Online\)](#), [Ballarat Courier \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Major study reveals arthritis drug can suppress type 1 diabetes

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 11/12/2023, Emily Craig

View gallery a rheumatoid arthritis drug can suppress the progression of type 1 diabetes in newly diagnosed patients, scientists have said. In a world-first clinical trial, researchers in Australia found that baricitinib can preserve the body's own insulin production. As a result, the anti-inflammatory drug, also known by its brand name Olumiant, reduces the amount of insulin patients need to inject to control their blood sugar.

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The gut health benefits of flaxseeds, and how they could reduce breast cancer risk

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 12/12/2023, Marie Claire Dorking

We've been sprinkling them on our porridge in the hope of reaping the gut health benefits of flaxseeds, but new research has suggested they could potentially reduce the risk of developing breast cancer. The study, on female mice, published in the journal, *Microbiology Spectrum*, found that when the rodents were given a solution of flaxseed oil, which contains lignans, a compound found in fibre-rich foods, it had an influence on the relationship between the gut microbiome and mammary gland microRNAs.

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Breast cancer breakthrough as new drug described as 'life-changing'

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 11/12/2023, Alexander Butler

A major breast cancer charity has said a new treatment will give "life-changing hope" to patients suffering from the disease. Breast Cancer Now said the approval of cancer treatment Trastuzumab deruxtecan ushered an "exciting new era" of treatment.

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Channel 9, National Nine News, 11/12/2023, Will McDonald

Men with thinning hair are being urged to take extra care this summer because of the link between baldness and higher rates of skin cancer. Mosh's Dr Niyati Sharma says a recent Queensland study found baldness might increase susceptibility to melanoma around the head and neck region.

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PRIMARY CARE

Faith leaders warn on VAD bill

The Australian, General News, 12/12/2023, Rhiannon Down, Page 5

Canberra and Goulburn Catholic Archbishop Christopher Prowse has warned that the ACT's proposed assisted suicide laws will not provide adequate protections to conscientious objectors, criticising the framework for undermining religious freedoms. Archbishop Prowse has vowed that no Catholic healthcare facility will "allow or undertake any steps in the process of euthanasia", raising concerns about the bill's silence on the rights of faith-based facilities to opt out from facilitating access to voluntary assisted dying.

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

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New office boxy as an ambulance

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 12/12/2023, Page 14

Designs for the state's new \$120m ambulance service headquarters at Richmond Rd, Mile End, have been revealed. Early works are expected to start in late March and be finished late in 2025. They include a two-storey Emergency Operations Centre, incorporating a State Health Coordination Centre, and an Adelaide ambulance station and garage.

Also reported by: [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#).

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Specialist college defends \$6000 'application for fellowship' fee

Australian Doctor, Other, 11/12/2023, Paul Smith

AMA president Professor Steve Robson wants more transparency over fees as radiologists complain about price hikes. The AMA has called for greater transparency from the specialist medical colleges around their methods for setting fees for their trainees.

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Paul Wappett says he was 'escorted from the premises' after being sacked by RACGP board

Australian Doctor, Other, 11/12/2023

Former ceo says the manner of his exit was 'unnecessary and humiliating'. Two weeks ago, AusDoc revealed that Paul Wappett, the RACGP's CEO, had left the organisation. There followed a media briefing by the college's chair Dr Lara Roeske, who said the reasons for his departure were confidential out of respect for Mr Wappett's privacy.

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GP practices needing intensive support to deal with growing red tape headache, warns PHN

Australian Doctor, Other, 11/12/2023, Rachel Carter

Western NSW PHN says a third of practices in the region require intensive outside help. GPs are increasingly in need of external support to run their practices as they struggle to keep up with Medicare billing requirements and other red tape, a primary health network says.

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Doctors 'intimidated' to prioritise ambo patients ahead of sicker ED cases to improve ramping figures

Australian Doctor, Other, 11/12/2023, Carmel Sparke

Dr David Pope, leading ED doctor, says patients have died because of the bureaucratic intervention. A leading emergency doctor claims medical staff are being "intimidated" to treat patients who arrive by ambulance over more urgent cases waiting in the ED to improve ramping figures.

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See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil: The conspiracy of silence within the medical profession

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 11/12/2023, Justin Nixon

The phrase 'conspiracy of silence' is defined by Collins Dictionary as: 'If there is a conspiracy of silence about something, people who know about it have agreed that they will not talk publicly about it, although it would probably be a good thing if people in general knew about it'.

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Channel 7, Seven News, 11/12/2023, Mike Amor and Rebecca Maddern

Victoria's ambulance crisis has been laid bare with an inquest hearing how a Preston man would still be alive if help arrived earlier. The father of three suffered a heart attack at home after five desperate 000 calls for help.

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Channel 9, Today, 11/12/2023, David Campbell, Sylvia Jeffreys, and Lara Vella

Interview with Dr Maria Boulton, Qld President, Australian Medical Association, on surgeons in Queensland, revealing they are so tired they feel drunk while on the job. The admission has prompted an emergency roundtable to try and resolve the critical staffing shortage. Boulton says they don't have enough doctors, nurses or other health care workers and it is especially felt in regional Queensland. She adds for the state to retain doctors in regional areas, Qld should ensure that the doctors and nurses that we have in those areas are supported.

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Victim's family give potent warning

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 12/12/2023, Laura Banks, Page 12

A review into NSW Police mental health responses sparked by the deaths of four people in five months at the hands of officers will not be delivered until next year months longer than promised. The delay has angered the family of a young woman shot dead in 2015 who fear "more people will be killed" without change.

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Avoid festive season burnout

West Australian, Today, 12/12/2023, Katie Hampson, Page 1

Mental health expert and life coach Tracey Horton said she is seeing "a lot of really tired people attempting to get through each day without collapsing" this year. Ms Horton said recent research revealed 64 per cent of people who already struggled with their mental health reported the Christmas holidays made their conditions worse.

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Expert reveals how to get a good sleep

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 12/12/2023, Melissa Rudy, Page 28

Anyone who has ever woken up in the middle of the night and struggled to go back to sleep knows the toll insomnia can take the following day. More than 17 per cent of adults had trouble staying asleep most days or every day of the past month, according to 2020 data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

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Why a growing number of Victorians are using hospital 'bed brokers' to access inpatient mental health care

The Guardian, Other, 12/12/2023, Adeshola Ore

As the festive season approached in 2021, Lily* was hoping to find a bed at a mental health hospital in Melbourne. Facing a relationship breakdown, housing instability and suicidal thoughts, she was desperate for help. A friend who worked as a psychiatrist told her about a brokerage service that tracked down hospital beds on behalf of prospective patients with private health insurance.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

HSU, NSW Health to meet at the Industrial Relations Commission amid threats 2100 paramedics will be unable to work on New Year's Day

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 11/12/2023, Jessica Wang

A major health union has claimed a dropped media story dropped during tense wage negotiations has "derailed" wage negotiations. The Health Services Union (HSU) is meeting with NSW Health representatives at the Industrial Relations Commission on Monday in an attempt to broker a deal amid threats more than 2100 paramedics will be pulled out of the workforce from New Year's Day.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

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Bitter paramedic pay stoush heads to industrial umpire

Canberra Times, Other, 11/12/2023, Peter Bodkin and Maeve Bannister

Hundreds of paramedics have reported they are looking to leave NSW for more lucrative work in other states as a long-running stand-off over pay heads to the industrial umpire. The bitter dispute has plagued the Minns government for more than eight months as paramedics point to higher salaries offered to their colleagues in the ACT, Queensland and Victoria.

Also reported by: [Bathurst Western Advocate \(Online\)](#), [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [Daily Liberal \(Online\)](#), [Shepparton News Online \(Online\)](#), [Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Northern Daily Leader \(Online\)](#), [The Senior \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#).

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Desperate for cash? Specialist medical colleges are eating their young trainees

Australian Doctor, Other, 11/12/2023, Matthew Lukies

Last year, one of the medical colleges introduced a \$6000 fee for registrars who had successfully met the demanding standards laid down for attaining fellowship. It was announced without undergoing any robust prior consultation with the trainees themselves as many of us would normally expect with a membership-based and not-for-profit organisation.

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Illawarra health boss applauds 'inspirational' staff after tough year

Illawarra Mercury, Other, 11/12/2023, Kate McIlwain

Health district chief Margot Mains has thanked staff across the Illawarra for working tirelessly during a challenging year in the region's hospitals and health services. At the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District's annual public meeting, which was held online due to increased COVID cases in the community, Ms Mains highlighted some of the biggest challenges - like aged care beds and emergency departments presentations - and successes.

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ABC Radio Sydney, Breakfast, 11/12/2023, James Valentine

Paramedics and the State Government are headed to the Industrial Relations Commission today over a long-running wage dispute. Around 2000 paramedics refused to renew their professional registration in protest over failed pay negotiations. Health Minister Ryan Park says the 000 emergency system could collapse at the end of the year unless the matter is resolved.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

WA paves way for pharmacy NIP services

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 11/12/2023

Western Australia's pharmacy vaccination rules are being brought into line with the Commonwealth's ahead of the expansion of National Immunisation Program funding. Community pharmacists in Western Australia will be able to offer the full range of National Immunisation Program (NIP) vaccines from 1 January, following an update to the state's Administration of Vaccines by Pharmacists.

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

Choice of digital reformer set to modernise myGov

Australian Financial Review, General News, 12/12/2023, Tom Burton, Page 3

Digital transformation expert David Hazlehurst has been appointed to lead federal agency giant Services Australia, in a move that could pave the way for the myGov portal to become a one-stop shop for all federal services.

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

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SPORT

Inquest calls on game to change

The Australian, Sport, 12/12/2023, Wendy Carlisle, Page 24

The afl has been urged to radically overhaul its concussion rules, with the Victorian State Coroner explicitly recommending the AFL warn players about the risk of developing CTE from subconcussive head knocks. The findings are significant because the coroner shifted debate away from concussion to the accumulation of head hits that do not produce concussion symptoms, which a player receives over the course of their career.

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Coroner calls for AFL head injury reform

Age, General News, 12/12/2023, Erin Pearson, Page 1

Independent doctors could remove AFL players from the field and clubs are being urged to slash the number of full-contact training sessions before the 2025 pre-season as part of extensive concussion changes recommended by a coroner investigating the death of former Richmond player Shane Tuck. State Coroner John Cain yesterday called on the AFL to limit the risk of significant head trauma to players during the on- and offseason in the men's and women's games.

Similar coverage reported by: [The Australian \(Australia\)](#), [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Canberra\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#).

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Heart test at Test, on Warnie

Courier Mail, General News, 12/12/2023, Peter Rolfe, Page 3

Shane Warne's beloved Boxing Day Test is set to provide the perfect platform to launch a lifesaving legacy the spin king will leave Australians. Cricket Australia has partnered with Shane Warne Legacy to set up 23 heart testing stations in and around the MCG for the Test.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#).

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Digging deep on big jobs

Courier Mail, General News, 12/12/2023, Madura McCormack , Page 10

Queensland's infrastructure pipeline ahead of the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games is under threat amid a critical shortfall of nearly 30,000 workers and a dire shortage of homegrown building materials. The major 2023 Market Capacity Report by Infrastructure Australia reveals that the national

infrastructure, housing and energy agenda is under threat due to major shortage of workers and challenges accessing building materials such as steel, and rock from quarries.

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Champion Aussie athlete reveals she didn't know if she could afford food before being forced to move overseas to chase her Olympic dream

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 11/12/2023, Ollie Lewis

Taneille Crase has opened up on the sobering reality of chasing her Olympic dream with the Australian forced to move overseas to pursue her goal. Crase, a three-time national champion in the heptathlon, has moved halfway across the world in a bid to be at her best for next year's Olympic trials and Paris Games.

[Read More](#)

Teams fume as Big Bash match abandoned due to dangerous pitch

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 11/12/2023

Cricket Australia will conduct a "thorough review" into Sunday's abandoned Big Bash League (BBL) match in Geelong after the Melbourne Renegades-Perth Scorchers clash was called off with 6.5 overs bowled due to safety concerns about the pitch. Heavy rain at the weekend had seeped under protective covers and left a wet patch at one end of the Kardinia Park wicket but officials cleared the match to go ahead after ground staff scrambled to rectify the situation.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Research has found that hot weather and violence are connected - what can be done to break the link

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 11/12/2023, Heather R. Stevens, Paul Beggs and Petra Graham , Page 6

Large parts of Australia are currently in the grip of a heatwave, and climate change means we're in for more frequent and intense heat events into the future. We know extreme heat can pose health risks, especially for vulnerable groups.

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UNSW to be investigated over 'preliminary' research misconduct inquiry that has taken two years

ABC Online, Other, 11/12/2023, Jack Ryan

The Australian Research Integrity Committee (ARIC) is set to investigate UNSW's handling of an alleged case of research misconduct. The allegations were first brought to the attention of UNSW in September 2021 by two research integrity experts. They involve scientists from the University's Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing (CHeBA).

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Voice defeat is no endpoint

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 12/12/2023, Paul Sakkal, Page 11

Former Indigenous affairs minister Ken Wyatt says the Voice referendum was too complicated and should have split the question of recognition as he called on national cabinet to urgently focus on closing the gap and reviewing billions in annual Indigenous spending. One of the key conservative supporters of the October referendum - which was rejected by 60 per cent of Australians - said many

Indigenous Australians and their leaders were still grieving but he hoped deep frustration and rejection would lead to fresh ideas.

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Care closer to home

Shepparton News, General News, 12/12/2023, Page 8

A Goulburn Valley health service is among seven across Victoria to share more than \$35 million in funding to help deliver 100,000 additional healthcare appointments. Victorian Health Minister Mary-Anne Thomas announced on Sunday that the money would be shared across the seven Aboriginal community controlled health organisations in Melbourne and regional Victoria, including the Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative in Mooroopna.

Also reported by: [Shepparton News Online \(Online\)](#).

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Better care for Aboriginals

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 11/12/2023, Page 10

The Murray Valley Aboriginal Cooperative will be among seven Victorian Aboriginal community health organisations to share in \$35 million, which aims to deliver 100,000 extra additional Aboriginal community health-care appointments. Victorian Health Minister Mary-Anne Thomas said the funding would support better access for Aboriginal Victorians to culturally safe and holistic primary care closer to home.

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

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Sky News Live, AM Agenda, 11/12/2023, Laura Jayes

Indigenous health care in Melbourne will soon get a \$35m boost from the Victorian Government. The funding will be shared across seven community health organisations in a bid to open up extra appointments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The money will go towards improving mental health and increasing resilience.

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OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Stone ban plan splits the industry

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 12/12/2023, Angus Thompson, Page 1

The building industry is fractured over plans to end the use of engineered stone as developers Lendlease and Mirvac back a ban of the kitchen benchtops killing tradies, in opposition to the housing lobby. As state and territory ministers flesh out a plan to prohibit the substance riddling stonemasons with irreversible lung conditions, advice from a top workplace lawyer warns that employers who continue to use engineered stone after a major report called for the ban are likely breaking the law.

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

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Alarm at STD spike

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 12/12/2023, Andrew Hough, Page 15

South Australia is in the grip of surging sexually transmitted diseases as authorities scramble to thwart a "serious outbreak" of one infection. Official data show almost 500 syphilis cases so far this year, especially a spike in infectious patients, in "multiple populations". The number of "infectious" syphilis patients in 2023 is more than the past two years' totals and double that recorded the year before the Covid-19 pandemic.

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

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Introducing the new COVID vaccine, now available for Illawarra residents

Illawarra Mercury, Other, 11/12/2023, Kate McIlwain

Illawarra residents are being asked to check if they need to get an extra COVID vaccine, as a new vaccine becomes available in the region. The Medical Director of the South Eastern Primary Health Network Dr Katherine Michelmore said the new shot was a good reminder about vaccination amid rising COVID cases and the Christmas season.

[Read More](#)

New COVID vaccines targeting Omicron subvariant XBB 1.5 are now available in Australia

ABC Online, Other, 11/12/2023, Leonie Thorne

New COVID booster shots are available in Australia from Monday. And as cases rise ahead of the holiday period yet again, experts say the latest vaccine will help protect against the subvariants currently spreading around the country.

[Read More](#)

Moderna, Merck begin late-stage study for mRNA cancer therapy

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 11/12/2023

Moderna and Merck & Co said on Monday they have started a late-stage trial of their experimental personalized mRNA cancer treatment in combination with blockbuster drug Keytruda for patients with a type of lung cancer. The therapy, V940, belongs to a class of treatments called m-RNA-based individualized neoantigen therapy (INT) and is tailored for each patient to generate T-cells, a key part of the body's immune response, based on the specific mutational signature of a tumor.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

New fund targets biotech start-ups starved of cash

Australian Financial Review, Technology, 12/12/2023, Jessica Sier, Page 20

A new venture capital fund aimed at funding cash-starved Australian medical, biotech and health technology start-ups has banked \$40 million of a planned \$200 million, as public valuations hit record lows.

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ACCC hurdle for Chemist Warehouse, Sigma merger

Sydney Morning Herald, Business News, 12/12/2023, Sarah Danckert, Page 26

Chemist Warehouse and its proposed partner, Sigma Healthcare, are confident they will be able to work through any issues raised by the competition regulator about market concentration in the pharmacy sector as part of the groups' \$8.8 billion merger. Chemist Warehouse and Sigma unveiled their long-awaited plans to list on the Australian Securities Exchange via a reverse listing through Sigma, which owns the Amcal brand and a successful medicine distribution business.

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Pharmacies to administer jab to fight new Covid-19 variant

The Courier Mail, Other, 11/12/2023, Jordan McCarthy

A vaccine will be available at pharmacies that will target the new Omicron variant of Covid-19 that has caused cases to spike in Australia. Health Canada has approved a new monovalent COVID-19 vaccine

from Moderna. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration approved the XBB 1.5 shot in October and the public can receive the vaccine both as their primary shot or as a booster to fight against Omicron.

Similar coverage reported by: : [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Sunraysia Daily \(Mildura\)](#), [Central Western Daily \(Orange\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Newcastle\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [Pharmacy Guild of Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Australians facing critical shortage of dozens of medicines, Therapeutic Goods Administration warns

7news.com.au, Other, 11/12/2023, Dominique Tassell

We're also short of more than 400 other medications for a range of conditions including Parkinson's disease, arthritis and type 2 diabetes. Australians are facing a shortage of critical medicines, including essential drugs for surgery and rare conditions, the federal government's Therapeutic Goods Administration has warned.

[Read More](#)

TGA warns of CV risk with osteoporosis drug

Australian Doctor, Other, 11/12/2023, Rachel Fieldhouse

Professor Roderick Clifton-Bligh said a cautious approach' was needed in patients with prior MI or stroke. Doctors are being warned against prescribing romosozumab in patients with a history of MI or stroke following a TGA investigation into the cardiovascular risks of the potent osteoporosis drug.

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Supporting patients through GLP-1 agonist cessation effects

Australian Pharmacist, Other, 11/12/2023, Chloe Hava

Glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1) agonists, traditionally used to manage type 2 diabetes, have been increasingly prescribed off-label for weight loss. There are four GLP-1 agonist medicines approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for use in Australia for the management of Type 2 Diabetes:

[Read More](#)

Channel 7, Seven News, 11/12/2023, Rosanna Mangiarelli and Will Goodings

People are being warned it could be hard to get some prescription medications this holiday season due to widespread shortages. The Therapeutic Goods Administration says almost 450 medicines are in short supply or have been discontinued.

[Play Now](#)

Channel 9, Today, 11/12/2023, David Campbell, Sylvia Jeffreys, and Lara Vella

Australia is facing a major medical shortage as the festive season comes into full swing. Those relying on critical medication could be forced to go without as the country faces shortages and the discontinuation of 446 drugs, 40 vital medications, including antidepressants and antibiotics, will be unavailable for many until some time next year.

[Play Now](#)

5AA, Breakfast, 11/12/2023, Will Goodings and David Penberthy

Australians are being offered alternative medications as stocks of popular antibiotics and antidepressants fall ahead of Christmas. The Therapeutic Goods Administration says more than 440 medicines are affected by shortages and discontinuation. Over 40 critical medicines are unavailable until early 2024.

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OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

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FOOD STANDARDS

Seeing red hotels hit by half-baked regulations

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 12/12/2023, David Basheer, Page 13

Like never before, the hotel industry is being strangled by red tape. Elected politicians must intervene to curtail the unreasonable growth of regulation and compliance that is now an exhausting burden. Our members are frustrated by the uncoordinated approach of local, state and federal agencies, who seem incapable of ever speaking to each other.

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Call to scrap use by dates

Hobart Mercury, General News, 12/12/2023, Page 4

Two major anti-food waste groups are calling on use-by dates on packaged fruits and vegetables to be scrapped in a move that mirrors regulations implemented in the UK. The move was pushed by the head of End Food Waste Australia - a recently formed body that combined groups Stop Food Waste Australia and the Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre.

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