



TODAY'S NEWS

Tuesday, 19th December 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [Australian Financial Review \(page 1\)](#) reports that Health Minister Mark Butler has rejected the health insurance industry's push to increase premiums by 6 per cent citing the industry's high profits in the last financial year, which doubled from \$1.04 billion to \$2.19 billion.
- [The Australian \(page 4\)](#) reports that a 24 per cent increase in commonwealth funding has been announced by Health Minister Mark Butler, declaring that the states would be considerably better off under the deal. Economists such as Grattan Institute's health and aged-care director Peter Breadon have suggested that additional funding should be granted to prevention and primary care facilities to address systemic problems such as chronic diseases and GP shortages.
- [The Australian \(page 1\)](#) reports that Northern Territory Chief Minister Natasha Fyles is facing internal pressure to resign after it was disclosed that she owned shares in mining company South 32 and refused to investigate suspected health impacts on Indigenous Territorians allegedly caused by the company while she was the NT Health Minister.
- The [Sydney Morning Herald \(page 1\)](#) reports that Simon Leake, founder and director of science at SESL Australia, has warned that the NSW government would need to review the

contamination risk of dangerous toxins in the industrial site Camellia before approving its neighbouring proposed 25,000 home mini-city.

- The **[Courier Mail \(page 5\)](#)** reports that the Queensland president of the Australian Medical Association, Maria Boulton, has said that communities in far North Queensland lack medical services in the aftermath of Cyclone Jasper due to chronic worker shortages and power outages.
- **[The Australian \(page 6\)](#)** reports that the newly-instated Queensland Premier Steven Miles has confirmed that there will not be a dedicated minister for the upcoming 2032 Brisbane Olympic games as it distracts from issues such as community safety.
- The **[Herald Sun \(page 15\)](#)** reports that Melbourne clinic Peninsula Health is the first in the Victorian healthcare system to offer the fast-acting painkiller methoxyflurane to IUD insertion patients after severe amounts of pain were consistently reported with the procedure.
- **[The ABC \(online\)](#)** reports that AUKUS briefing notes obtained by a freedom of information request have revealed plans for a nuclear waste storage facility in the HMAS Stirling defence base on Garden Island, WA, which will temporarily store radioactive waste from 2027.

MINISTER BUTLER

Labor rejects 6pc health insurance rise

Australian Financial Review, General News, 19/12/2023, Michael Read, Page 1

Health Minister Mark Butler has rejected the health insurance industry's request to deliver the biggest premium rise in at least six years, as the government tries to quell voter discontent over the rapid increase in the cost of living.

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

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Priorities of health billions queried

The Australian, General News, 19/12/2023, Jess Malcolm, Page 4

Health Minister Mark Butler has declared the 24 per cent increase in commonwealth funding for hospitals is a much fairer deal for the states as health economists question the spending priorities in the national cabinet deal. Mr Butler declared the states would be considerably better off under the deal, which massively increases commonwealth spending.

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

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UOW to train more future doctors for rural and regional Australia

Northern Rivers Times, General News, 21/12/2023, Page 36

An extra 30 medical students will do their medical studies each year in the University of Wollongong's end-to-end rural medical program as part of a \$90 million Australian Government investment to support rural medical students nationally. [...] The additional places and funding were announced by Health Minister the Honourable Mark Butler MP today (4 December).

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Care clinic to ease ED strain

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 19/12/2023, Leighton Smith, Page 2

A pressure valve has been released for Townsville's hospital emergency departments after a new medical centre opened in Kirwan, offering bulk-billing for patients with non-life-threatening issues. [...] Health and Aged Care Minister Mark Butler said the clinic would ease pressure on the Townsville University Hospital, allowing health staff to concentrate on higher-priority emergencies.

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Minister announces \$456m in funding for mental health organisations

Health Minister Mark Butler announced \$456 million for Lifeline, 13 Yarn, Beyond Blue.

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What will make GPs happy this Christmas? AusDoc asks ChatGPT

Australian Doctor, Other, 18/12/2023, Paul Smith

'I won't be getting any gifts this Christmas,' the world's most famous AI bot reveals. It has indeed been a tough year on many levels for a lot of people. [...] Mark Butler will be asking some tough questions given his tripled bulk-billing incentives.

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NHMRC awards \$647m to health and medical researchers

LabOnline, Other, 19/12/2023

Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler has announced that the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is investing \$379 million to support 216 emerging and established leaders in health and medical research across Australia, in order to tackle the nation's greatest health challenges. The funding will be provided through NHMRC's Investigator Grant scheme, which provides high-performing researchers at all career stages with consolidated funding for their salary (if required) and a significant research support package for five years.

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MINISTER WELLS

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

New mental health service opens its doors in Sunshine

Brimbank & North West Star Weekly, General News, 19/12/2023, Page 11

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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More agencies vote 'yes' for pay increase

Canberra Times, General News, 19/12/2023, Miriam Webber, Page 9

Five Australian Public Service agencies have voted up their enterprise agreements, endorsing the Albanese government's pay offer of 11.2 per cent over three years. The Department of Health and Aged Care, National Health Funding Body, Department of Finance, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Treasury have voted "yes" on their enterprise agreements, with another two agencies expected to vote before Christmas.

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Empowering families for safer school holiday screen time: tips from Triple P

Northern Rivers Times, General News, 21/12/2023, Page 18

The school holidays are here and making sure kids are engaging in safe screen time activities is front-of-mind for many families. [...] Delivery of the Triple P - Positive Parenting Program to parents and carers of children in Australia is supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care under the Parenting Education and Support Program.

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Resources for communities affected by the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and Israel

Cohealth Australia, Other, 18/12/2023

Cohealth is deeply distressed by the humanitarian crisis in Israel and Gaza. The attacks on hospitals and healthcare professionals are in direct contradiction of international law. [...] Department of Health and Aged Care mental health resource pamphlet.

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Christmas comes early as Feros Village residents secure their home's future

HelloCare, Other, 18/12/2023, Alex Jacobs

After ten determined months of standing their ground, Feros Village Byron Bay residents have stopped the closure of their residential care home, safeguarding their future just in time for Christmas celebrations. [...] Last week, Byron Bay's much-loved Feros Village residents received a letter from Feros Care explaining it will hand over its allocation of aged care beds to the Department of Health and Aged Care on January 29 2024.

[Read More](#)

First three APS agencies support workplace deals, others front industrial action

RiotACT, Other, 18/12/2023, Chris Johnson

Employees across three Australian Public Service agencies have voted yes on their enterprise agreements, which include APS-wide pay and conditions, and agency-level matters. Those agencies are the Department of Health and Aged Care; the Department of Finance; and the National Health Funding Body (NHFB).

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APSC accelerates wage deal

The Mandarin, Other, 18/12/2023, Julian Bajkowski

The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) has publicly paraded three public service agencies as having voted up its pay deal for the wider public service getting 11.2% over three years, despite ongoing industrial action over conditions. [...] The ASPC continued that "94.4 per cent of employees in the Department of Health and Aged Care who voted supported the new arrangements, with 76.8 per cent of employees participating in the agency's ballot.

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Department confirms major change to home care packages in retirement villages being considered

The Weekly Source, Other, 18/12/2023, Caroline Egan

At the New Aged Care Act and Support at Home Program Update webinar, which 8,000 participants registered to attend, Nick Morgan, Assistant Secretary, Support at Home Reform Branch, confirmed the Department of Health and Aged Care is considering allowing retirement village residents to pool their funds for shared services, such as on-site nurses or a communal minibus.

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CORONAVIRUS

Covid, flu top festive illnesses

Hobart Mercury, General News, 19/12/2023, Merryn Johns, Page 5

Respiratory illnesses spreading across the globe have arrived in Australia in time for the holidays as international travel accelerates the transmission of new viruses. RSV, human para-influenza, and swine flu have joined new strains of Covid, influenza and the common cold to create a contagion Christmas that threatens severe illness if untreated.

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Festive warning as poll reveals lax COVID-19 attitudes

Canberra Times, Other, 19/12/2023, Callum Godde

Australians are becoming blasé about COVID-19 vaccinations and safety measures as the pandemic drags on, prompting a warning for the festive season. The latest COVID community sentiment index, commissioned by Pfizer Australia, polled 1000 Australians aged 18 years and older from November 27 to 30 amid the nation's eighth virus wave.

Also reported by: [Michael West Media \(Online\)](#), [Corowa Free Press \(Online\)](#), [Shepparton News Online \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

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ABC Radio Canberra, Breakfast, 18/12/2023, Georgia Stynes

The Australian Medical Association has cautioned against political interference in future pandemic responses, emphasising the necessity of expert guidance over political considerations. In its submission to the Federal Government's COVID-19 Response Inquiry, the AMA highlighted that the politicisation of public health messaging during the pandemic contributed to inconsistencies and eroded public trust. While acknowledging the overall success of Australia's response due to government adherence to expert advice, AMA President Dr Steve Robson notes that instances of politicisation did contribute to community distrust in the health response.

Also reported by: [ABC Radio Melbourne \(Melbourne\)](#), [ABC Radio Sydney \(Sydney\)](#), [ABC Radio Hobart \(Hobart\)](#), [ABC Radio Adelaide \(Adelaide\)](#), [ABC Radio Adelaide \(Adelaide\)](#).

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ABC Radio Hobart, Statewide Mornings, 18/12/2023, David Reilly

Interview with Tasmanian Director of Public Health Dr Mark Veitch about the Christmas COVID surge, now on its third straight year. Veitch emphasises the importance of seeking medical and vaccination, although noting that cases are at a plateau at the moment. He notes that vaccines for new COVID variants will be rolled out in the state, adding that all the vaccines are very similar in their protective efficacy.

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Coroner blasts slow records hand-over

Burnie Advocate, General News, 19/12/2023, Joe Colbrook, Page 7

A state coroner has issued a stern rebuke after an aged care facility repeatedly failed to hand over documents when asked. Coroner Robert Webster investigated the death of Laurence Keith Gray, who died on February 21, 2022 after a fall occurring at a nursing home. According to Mr Webster's report, Mr Gray moved into the Glenview Nursing Home at Glenorchy five days beforehand after two previous falls.

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

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Research roundup

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 19/12/2023

Debbie Rigby rounds up the latest in research news Quality and safety in residential aged care: an evaluation of a national quality indicator programme Evaluation of Australia's National QI programme shows a major stride towards a culture of quality promotion, improvement and transparency in residential aged care.

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Only one aged care provider left on ASX as Estia Health delists

The Weekly Source, Other, 18/12/2023, Caroline Egan

Estia Health was delisted from the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX) today, leaving Regis Aged Care the last remaining publicly listed aged care operator in Australia. Estia Health shares were suspended from trade on 6 December, with the stock last trading at \$3.08. US-based Bain Capital acquired Estia Health for \$3.20 per share , less the aged care operator's 12 cents per share dividend.

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Opal HealthCare's Narwee Parklands second to receive SSDA approval

The Weekly Source, Other, 18/12/2023, Caroline Egan

In another coup for CEO Rachel Argaman, the aged care provider is the second to see a development application approved under the NSW Department of Planning and Environment's State Significant Development Application (SSDA) fast-tracked pathway to approval process. The pathway opened in November 2021 and the first document for Opal HealthCare 's proposal in Narwee, 18km south of Sydney's CBD, the Environmental Impact Statement, was prepared by Ethos Urban in December 2022.

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5AA, Afternoons, 18/12/2023, Sandy Verschoor

Interview with COTA SA CEO Miranda Starke about their Let's Talk Aged Care program. Starke notes that their program is a free service, especially for those having trouble accessing My Aged Care. She says they are completely neutral and independent since they are not an actual aged care provider.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Get cleaning horse before building cart

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 19/12/2023, Max Maddison, Page 1

One of the state's leading contamination experts has urged the government to ensure the "highly contaminated" Camellia precinct neighbouring Rosehill Racecourse is free of potentially dangerous toxins before approving development applications for the proposed new "mini-city". Simon Leake, inset, a founder and director of science at environmental consultant SESL Australia, said the government would need to review the contamination risk of Camellia, an industrial site, but added if there were any

legacy issues remediation work would need to ensure they did not pose a threat to future residents' health.

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EPA to probe Alcoa's plans to mine ancient WA jarrah forest

Kalgoorlie Miner, General News, 19/12/2023, Page 4

An environmental regulator will examine alumina giant Alcoa's mining operations and its plan to clear ancient jarrah forest. The Environmental Protection Authority says it will "comprehensively scrutinise" parts of the US-listed company's five-year bauxite mining program for its Huntly and Willowdale sites on the Darling Range in WA. [...] It said the pipeline was likely to contain wastewater contaminated with PFAS, associated with serious health issues.

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Research finds Australians are smoking less but are sadder than ever

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 18/12/2023, Holly Berckelman

Struggled with mental health this year? You're not alone. [...] According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, "Chronic diseases are long-lasting conditions with persistent effects.

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

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Alcoa mines probe over plan to clear ancient forest

Canberra Times, Other, 18/12/2023, Aaron Bunch

An environmental regulator will examine alumina giant Alcoa's mining operations and its plan to clear ancient Jarrah forest. The Environmental Protection Authority says it will "comprehensively scrutinise" parts of the US-listed company's five-year bauxite mining program for its Huntly and Willowdale sites on the Darling Range in Western Australia.

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

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This silent killer claims more Aussie lives than any other natural disaster

Canberra Times, Other, 18/12/2023, Tom Hanstrum

The number of extremely hot days is increasing and, with more intense heat to come over summer, it is important to understand how you can stay safe. Heatwaves claim more lives than any other natural disaster in Australia. [...] More than half - 244 - of the deaths were recorded in buildings, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

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

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Jason had a health scare in his 30s. Here's how he 'saved himself' and took up marathon running

SBS, Other, 18/12/2023, Tianyuan Qu and Olivia Yuan

A simple medical check-up more than 20 years ago revealed that Jason Wu was on the precipice of a range of potentially life-threatening illnesses. The setback led him to radically change his lifestyle. [...] In a report based on Census data, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare noted that immigrants born in Asian countries were more susceptible to diabetes, heart disease, and kidney disease.

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WA environment watchdog to scrutinise Alcoa's jarrah forest mining

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 18/12/2023, Peter Milne

Alcoa's mining of bauxite in WA's south-west will be subject to the most detailed review possible by the state's independent environment watchdog. The US aluminium specialist endured a barrage of bad

publicity in its 60th year in WA, including revelations by this masthead that the state government was concerned its clearing could harm Perth's water supply; that it piped water contaminated with toxic firefighting chemical PFAS over a Water Corporation dam without permission, and it was yet to fully rehabilitate a single hectare of jarrah forest.

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5AA, Mornings, 18/12/2023, Matthew Pantelis

Interview with Flinders University College of Medicine and Public Health Dr Ashlea Bartram about the impact of the rapidly growing zero alcohol drinks market on young Australians. Bartram notes that alcohol consumption has particularly harmful effects on young people, including risks of mental health harm or risky sexual behaviour. She says these non-alcoholic products still look and taste very much like alcohol products, with many having the same branding on them, so they're concerned that consumers might be enticed to take the next step of drinking the alcoholic version itself.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Fit cyclist's heart-stopping moment

Launceston Examiner, General News, 19/12/2023, Libby Bingham, Page 10

Sixty-year-old Sharron Yaxley, of Turners Beach, is a super fit and active person. She regularly saw a cardiologist for 16 years because she knew she was at higher risk of premature heart disease after both her parents had bypass surgeries in their fifties. "I thought I was doing the right thing," she said.

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

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Study busts holes in use of opioids for pain relief

Canberra Times, Other, 19/12/2023, Duncan Murray

Opioids may be no more beneficial for treating cancer-related pain than aspirin or even a placebo, a study has found. The trial led by researchers from the University of Sydney is one of few in the world to compare opioids such as morphine, oxycodone and methadone with a placebo.

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

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I wrote my eulogy in my 20s. It forced me to look at my life differently than before

SBS, Other, 18/12/2023

At just three weeks of age, I was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis, a genetic illness in which a defective gene affects the lungs, pancreas, and other organs. My parents recall the early months of my life as being quite a contrast. They say on one hand, it's the most joy and love you've ever experienced, and on the other, you're being told that the love and joy may not last long at all.

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Hope in battle against deadliest types of cancer after scientists discover new ways to target impenetrable 'Death Star' protein that fuels tumour growth

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 19/12/2023, Xantha Leatham

Experts have paved the way for new treatments against some of the deadliest forms of cancer after discovering ways to target the 'Death Star' protein. Mutations in the protein, also known as KRAS, are responsible for one in 10 cases of cancer and drive 40 per cent of lung cancers, 45 per cent of bowel cancers and 90 per cent of pancreatic cancers.

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Scientists create a vest that maps the electrical activity of the heart with the potential to save thousands of lives

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 18/12/2023, Victoria Allen

A vest that maps the electrical activity of the heart in detail could save thousands of lives. Patients with suspected cardiac problems currently get a standard ECG, using 12 leads which are stuck on to the chest, arms and legs. [...] The vest, which was funded by the British Heart Foundation and is already being used for research in some London hospitals, has been used successfully in 800 patients but not yet been tested on all the different types of heart patients it could help.

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

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2CC, Breakfast, 18/12/2023, Stephen Cenatiempo

Interview with Public Health Association of Australia CEO Terry Slevin about the ABS National Health Survey showing that half of all Australian adults have a chronic health condition. Slevin discusses their call to action to all levels of government to address this growing concern, saying these long-term conditions diminish the quality of life, and in many cases lead to premature death. He says many of these conditions are preventable, adding that many measures are going in the wrong direction, citing the decreasing smoking rates but with an increasing vaping rate instead.

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PRIMARY CARE

Whistle is green light for no pain

Herald Sun, General News, 19/12/2023, Sarah Booth, Page 13

Women should be offered better relief for a common but painful procedure, experts say, as a Melbourne clinic challenges the long-held belief that they should tolerate the pain. Peninsula Health is believed to be the first in the Victorian public system to offer a "green whistle" to patients getting IUDs, a long-lasting contraceptive placed in the uterus.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#).

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Concern over medical supplies

Courier Mail, General News, 19/12/2023, Jill Poulsen, Page 5

The state's peak medical group is concerned North Queenslanders could be left without access to medical services, some of which have already been forced to close with no access to power or phone lines. AMA Queensland president Maria Boulton said her Far North Queensland colleagues were working in challenging conditions.

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Specialist waits drop

Courier Mail, General News, 19/12/2023, Page 11

The number of people waiting longer than clinically recommended for vital specialist appointments has dropped since the start of the year, with data showing 19 out of 28 outpatient specialties reporting a drop. Queensland's public hospitals delivered more than 676,435 appointments in 2022-23, exceeding pre-Covid levels by 19 per cent.

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Teletrial health boost for NT

Northern Territory News, General News, 19/12/2023, Sierra Haigh, Page 3

A teletrial program in the NT will grant Territorians greater access to new medicines, but does not guarantee every resident will be able to access lifesaving treatments without added travel costs. The

federal government's five-year, \$75.2m Australian Teletrial program will link remote trial sites with urbanbased sites so patients can access drugs, therapies, and devices at a local centre.

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We need to work together

Border Mail, General News, 19/12/2023, Anthony Bunn, Page 1

Councils are being urged to assist with housing and childcare to cater for an estimated 750 new staff to be employed in the wake of the Albury hospital redevelopment. The extent of fresh workers and related impacts have been outlined by Albury Wodonga Health's chairman Jonathon Green and chief executive Bill Appleby in an interview with The Border Mail.

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VAD study to canvass dementia voices

Daily Advertiser, General News, 19/12/2023, Dan Holmes, Page 3

With voluntary assisted dying now legal in NSW, academics have started investigating how these changes will affect the community. A Charles Sturt University (CSU) PhD candidate is investigating the affect these changes will have on the dementia community. Adrienne Matthys is seeking the perspectives of people with dementia on euthanasia to inform future policy development on voluntary assisted dying.

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Region's ambos spat on, abused in attacks

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 19/12/2023, Tamara Mcdonald, Page 5

Paramedics are reporting more violence on the job, with ambos across the region assaulted and spat on. Ambulance Victoria says incidents of occupational violence have increased by 14 per cent, with 580 cases reported last financial year, and 41 of these occurring in the Barwon South West region. This trend is continuing, with 33 incidents already reported by Barwon South West paramedics from July to November.

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Bulk-billing urgent care boost for Dapto

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 19/12/2023, Kate Mcilwain, Page 9

Residents of southern Wollongong will once again have access to extended-hours, bulk-billed medical care with the opening of the region's third urgent care centre. Located at Dapto Medical and Dental Centre in the town centre, which used to offer late-night walk-in GP appointments, the new NSW Government service is designed to take the pressure off Wollongong and Shellharbour emergency departments.

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JCU granted \$1.5 million for Melioidosis research program

The Courier Mail, Other, 19/12/2023, Jami Roberts

Cases of a disease that spreads through muddy soil and water continue to rise as floods plague Far North Queensland. Cases of a North Australia disease that spreads through muddy soil and water continue to rise as floods continue to plague Far North Queensland. [...] AMA Queensland president Dr Maria Boulton sounded the alarm over fears residents could be at risk of catching the rare tropical disease Melioidosis or tetanus.

[Read More](#)

2023: Australia's deadliest year on the roads in half a decade

SBS, Other, 18/12/2023, Sydney Lang

The shocking statistics come from recent data from the Australian Automobile Association. The Australian Federal Police are urging Australians to take extra caution on the roads over the busy Christmas period. [...] The Australian Medical Association is echoing those calls.

[Read More](#)

NSW family urging passengers to confront drunk, dangerous drivers after son killed in crash

7news.com.au, Other, 18/12/2023, Rachael Ward

The teenager was a passenger in a car that slammed into a wall at more than 30km/h over the limit. Passengers are being urged to have the courage to confront a driver who is affected by substances, distracted or too tired to get behind the wheel. [...] AMA NSW president Michael Bonning said every step must be taken to address the disturbingly high road toll.

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Hundreds of specialists ditching their college memberships for independent CPD Homes

Australian Doctor, Other, 18/12/2023, Paul Smith

AMA WA says that more than a thousand specialists have signed up to its CPD Home. Specialists are ditching college membership after signing up with independent CPD Homes, says AMA WA. Last month, the Medical Board of Australia issued a reminder to the profession that to remain on the medical register, all doctors will have to have a so-called CPD Home.

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Road deaths are rising — understanding why requires better, faster data

Crikey, Other, 18/12/2023, Bernard Keane

Recent road tragedies have focused more attention on an issue that has been becoming apparent for some time — Australia's long history of a diminishing road toll has gone into reverse. In the most recent data from the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics [...] The Australian Automobile Association has long been calling for much better sharing of important road accident data by the states and territories, a call backed by the Australian Medical Association.

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Helpful checklist

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 18/12/2023

A new checklist for practitioners has been developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care to help resolve feedback or complaints made directly to practitioners or the health service where they are working. Pharmacists might find this checklist, [HERE](#), helpful when a complaint is first raised with them by a patient or client, and it may also be relevant to those who have a role in establishing and maintaining complaints systems and processes at a health service.

[Read More](#)

Aussies missing vital care as stroke response falls short

The Senior, Other, 18/12/2023

Australian stroke patients are missing out on timely and potentially life-saving care, according to an alarming new report. A Stroke Foundation audit of about 100 acute hospital services found Australia is falling well below international standards and not meeting national benchmark treatment times.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Don't wait, meditate: 'It changed my life as a CEO, a husband and a parent'

The Australian, Business News, 19/12/2023, Hannah Prevett, Page 14

Russell Glass, the easygoing and quietly self-assured boss of Headspace, the mindfulness and mental health coaching company, does not appear to be a worrier. But he once suffered from crippling impostor syndrome. It was 2014 and he had started a job as a senior executive at LinkedIn, just as his third daughter was born.

Some things don't add up this Christmas

Canberra Times, General News, 19/12/2023, Zoe Wundenberg, Page 16

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas but the sight of decorated trees in shop windows and the sounds of silver bells over the shopping centre PA system represents a stress trigger for a growing number of Australians who celebrate the holiday. [...] In September of this year, Mental Health Australia released their independently produced report (by Ipsos). This report concluded that the mental health of Australians in general was declining and they cited cost of living pressures as a significant factor in this downwards trend.

Also reported by: [Daily Liberal \(Dubbo\)](#), [Western Advocate \(Bathurst\)](#), [Northern Daily Leader \(Tamworth\)](#), [Central Western Daily \(Orange\)](#), [Daily Advertiser \(Wagga Wagga\)](#), [Bendigo Advertiser \(Bendigo\)](#), [Ballarat Courier \(Ballarat\)](#).

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Why this sleep expert wants everyone to stop worrying about sleep

Australian Financial Review, Other, 18/12/2023, Emma Connors

Anxiety about not getting enough sleep has become a problem in itself. Here's what you can do about it - and a bit of late night TV is OK.

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7 signs your drinking could be a problem

The Courier Mail, Other, 18/12/2023, Diane Young

Don't let hangovers ruin your holidays If you struggle to socialise without a drink in hand or find yourself counting down the hours until midday, it could be time to reevaluate your relationship with the bottle, experts say. With its festive cheer and celebrations, the Christmas and New Year period is the time of the year that brings people together for joyous occasions.

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Perth, Statewide Mornings, 18/12/2023, Damian Smith

Interview with Curtin University Senior Research Fellow Dr Sarah Hellewell about how artificial intelligence could be helpful for depression, which has been described by the WHO as the single biggest contributor to ill health globally. Hellewell notes that one of the challenges of depression is that it's very difficult to diagnose because the symptoms are very different for every person. She says AI can utilise machine learning capabilities and find very intricate patterns with increasing certainty by studying 100,000 people, for instance. She also mentions a research using ChatGPT, where it was presented with fictional patients and found that it could diagnose better than the GPs and follow the guidelines better for the clinical management of depression.

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ABC Radio Sydney, Mornings, 18/12/2023, Antoinette Lattouf

Interview with Wayne State University Director of Stress, Trauma and Anxiety Research Clinic Arash Javanbakht about navigating the harsh realities of the world, which can lead to second-hand trauma. Javanbakht says second-hand trauma is often seen amongst first responders and journalists who are on the scene of horrific events, but it's now also seen in other groups of people with so much availability and exposure to the news. He emphasises the difference between social media and TV, where the latter has editorial teams who censor graphic content as opposed to the former which does not have any filtering process. He says seeing similar graphic content over and over can result in developing symptoms of anxiety, frustration, depression, extreme sadness and anger which can then impact someone's life and that of their family.

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Radio National, Breakfast, 18/12/2023, Sally Sara

Interview with ANU outgoing Vice-Chancellor Prof Brian Schmidt about a landmark study, the Mayi Kawayu survey, examining how everyday discrimination is contributing to major levels of psychological

distress among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults. Schmidt calls for all Australians to do more to tackle the scourge of racism, saying the psychological stress due to racism is one of the major things causing First Australians to have a general lack of health and wellbeing. He notes that they've been working with their experts to come up with ways to tackle racism on their campus.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Premier turns page on pay restrictions

West Australian, General News, 19/12/2023, Josh Zimmerman, Page 4

Nurses, doctors, police officers and other government workers are in line for potentially lucrative pay rises after Premier Roger Cook announced the end of six years of restrictive wages policy. Under the new approach, there is no headline figure that will be offered across the board. The Government will instead return to "genuine" bargaining that assesses each enterprise agreement on its merits.

Also reported by: [Kalgoorlie Miner \(Kalgoorlie\)](#).

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

Plan a 'generational change'

Border Mail, General News, 19/12/2023, Anthony Bunn, Page 5

Albury Wodonga Health consulted more than 500 people for its new strategic plan, chief executive Bill Appleby said. The document, which was released at the organisation's annual meeting last week, is the first of its type to apply to Albury Wodonga Health since 2021, when a previous version expired.

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

Changes to WA Government wages policy for public sector workers, including cops, nurses and teachers

West Australian, Other, 18/12/2023, Josh Zimmerman

Premier Roger Cook has announced the end of a uniform approach to wages bargaining with government sector workers, potentially opening the door to big pay hikes for nurses, doctors, policeman, firefighters and other frontline personnel. Speaking one day before the mid-year budget review — which is expected to upgrade what was already forecast as a \$3.3 billion surplus for 2023-24 — Mr Cook revealed six years of forcing all public sector workers to accept the same salary increases were over.

[Read More](#)

Channel 10, 10 News First, 18/12/2023, Jennifer Keyte

An increasingly bitter feud between Victorian firefighters and their management is set to be resolved by an independent umpire, as the Fair Work Commission initiates hearings to determine pay and conditions. The United Firefighters Union is pushing for a 25% pay increase over four years, contrasting sharply with the Government's 3% annual wage policy aimed at managing mounting government debt, a policy that has already prompted industrial action by police officers. With Ambulance Victoria's pay deal looming next month, the Government could potentially face challenges from a triple threat involving 000 responders.

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Channel 10, 10 News First, 18/12/2023, Natalie Forrest

WA's public sector workers anticipate benefiting from the state's massive surplus as the State Government lifts a stringent wage cap, a move hailed as a victory by unions. However, the Opposition has expressed concern about potential wage battles. The State Government is now customising pay agreements for each workforce, though the ongoing wage dispute with the nurses' union remains unresolved. While the new policy applies to agreements expiring from October onward, the nurses' union is poised to vote on two offers.

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6PR, Mornings, 18/12/2023, Gary Adshead

Interview with UnionsWA Secretary Owen Whittle about the WA Government's new Public Sector Wages Policy. Whittle welcomes this new development, noting that the arbitrary wages cap has been scrapped in a great victory for public sector workers and unions in WA. He notes that they've been campaigning between unions, which doesn't include nurses, to increase public sector wages, although he emphasises that nurses across the state deserve a pay rise as all other public sector workers. He believes that nurses are close to finalising their bargaining with the Government.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

Wholesalers working to maintain supplies

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 18/12/2023, Spili Gefidakis

Australian Pharmaceutical Industries (API) is maintaining supply in flood-ravaged Far North Queensland, while road closures are impacting Symbion's deliveries. Wholesalers are working with emergency services to deliver medications to pharmacies operating in flood-affected parts of Queensland.

[Read More](#)

Flood-affected Twomey calls for '8CPA now'

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 18/12/2023, Philip Smith

Guild president urges government to sign a new Community Pharmacy Agreement "now", if it wants to help the sector ensure patients are not worse off. If the federal government wants to support pharmacies in flood-affected Far North Queensland, it should deliver the Eighth Community Pharmacy Agreement (8CPA) immediately, Professor Trent Twomey, the national president of

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

Aussies miss out on \$222m

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 19/12/2023, Eleanor Campbell, Page 4

Thousands of people have been repaid millions of dollars from Medicare in time for Christmas after it was revealed close to one million Australians were sitting on \$234m in unclaimed funds. The federal government announced in November that nearly one million people were owed rebates because they did not have their banking details updated on myGov.

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Channel 9, National Nine News, 18/12/2023, Alicia Loxley

As the holiday season approaches, millions of dollars in Medicare benefits are making their way into the bank accounts of Australians. About 55,000 individuals are benefiting from a \$12m pool of unclaimed rebates, attributed to outdated banking details on myGov. Urgent reminders have been

issued, urging people to check their inbox messages to determine if they are eligible for any outstanding funds.

Also reported by: [Channel 9 \(Adelaide\)](#), [Channel 9 \(Brisbane\)](#), [Channel 9 Darwin \(Darwin\)](#), [Channel 9 \(Perth\)](#)

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

No relevant coverage

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

New Warrawong Community Health Centre plans unveiled

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 19/12/2023, Natalie Croxon, Page 9

The first designs of the future Warrawong Community Health Centre have been released, about six months before work on the development is due to start. The new centre will be built on part of the Port Kembla Hospital site and will include a number of health services.

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

Thea's Christmas wish comes true

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 19/12/2023, Samantha Landy, Page 8

Thea Hattersley is on track to spend her first Christmas at home with her family after receiving a "life-changing" liver transplant in Melbourne. The child was one of the youngest Australians to join the organ transplant waitlist after being born premature in May 2021 with an abdominal cyst and biliary atresia a rare disease blocking bile ducts in the liver.

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

Rise in used needles at Gilgandra waste facility puts hand sorting recyclers at risk

ABC Online, Other, 18/12/2023, Emily Middleton

Finding surprises in recycling bin contents is not unusual for waste facility workers but after discovering 53 syringes in a day, management at a regional NSW centre is raising the alarm. Gilgandra waste facility operations manager Michael Hodge said the number of syringes in recycling was increasing, posing concerns for staff, some of whom live with disability and were employed under an NDIS-supported program.

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SPORT

Olympics role too 'divisive' for cabinet

The Australian, General News, 19/12/2023, Sarah Elks, Page 6

New Queensland Premier Steven Miles says the Brisbane 2032 Olympics became divisive under his predecessor, Annastacia Palaszczuk, and distracted the government from more important priorities such as community safety. Unveiling his new cabinet, Mr Miles confirmed there would be no dedicated minister for the Olympics, less than nine years out from the Brisbane Games, as debate continues to rage over whether to scrap Ms Palaszczuk's \$2.7bn plan to demolish and rebuild the Gabba as the event's main venue.

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Heartbreak for athletes

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 19/12/2023, Page 4

One in six elite athletes have measures that would normally suggest reduced heart function, a new study reveals. The study involving 281 elite athletes from Australia and Belgium, conducted by scientists at the St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research in Melbourne and the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, also discovered this same group of athletes had a genetic predisposition to the reduction in heart function.

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

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

GMHBA Stadium not big enough

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 19/12/2023, Alexander Blain, Page 7

Hopes the Matildas could play an Olympic qualifier in Geelong have been quashed, with the Victorian government and Football Australia opting to play the game in Melbourne. GMHBA Stadium was ultimately "not considered" due to limited capacity, with Marvel Stadium announced as the venue on Monday.

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Premier's stunning Olympics reversal

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 19/12/2023, Hayden Johnson, Page 6

Former premier Anastacia Palaszczuk's obsession with the Olympic and Paralympic Games has been repudiated by Steven Miles, who has axed three portfolios and refused to name a dedicated minister for the role. It is a stunning reversal from eight days ago, when Ms Palaszczuk was Olympics minister and two ministers were assisting her on Olympic sport and Olympic infrastructure.

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'Divisive' Oly portfolio axed in new-look state cabinet

The Senior, Other, 18/12/2023, Laine Clark

The Olympics portfolio has been axed in a revamped Queensland cabinet after it became "divisive", new state premier Steven Miles says. A frontbench with five new ministers was officially sworn in on Monday barely a week after Anastacia Palaszczuk's shock resignation as premier.

Also reported by: [Yahoo! News Australia \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#)

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

No relevant coverage

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Pressure on Chief Minister to resign

The Australian, General News, 19/12/2023, Matt Cunningham, Page 1

Northern Territory Chief Minister Natasha Fyles is facing internal pressure to resign over an undeclared conflict of interest. Senior Labor sources said high-level discussions had been held after it was reported she had failed to declare a conflict of interest relating to shares she owns in mining company South 32.

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

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

Elderly patient placed in spit hood

Northern Territory News, General News, 19/12/2023, Zizi Averill, Page 3

An elderly patient with severe dementia was restrained in a spit hood while in hospital days before his death in custody, the Territory coroner has heard. The 66-year-old man, known for cultural reasons as Kumunjayi Ptjara, passed away at Alice Springs Hospital on September 12, 2023 just two weeks after being sent to prison for a breach of bail.

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

Peering into hospital crystal ball

Ballarat Courier, General News, 19/12/2023, Melanie Whelan, Page 3

Improving at-home healthcare will increasingly become a focus for the region in the next two decades, even with Ballarat Base Hospital undergoing its biggest ever overhaul. Grampians Health has released its infrastructure road map dated to 2043 that will be a dynamic plan, constantly adjusted to meet changing community and financial needs and technological advancements.

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NT Chief Minister Natasha Fyles holds undisclosed shares in company that owns Groote Eylandt mine

ABC Online, Other, 18/12/2023

The Northern Territory chief minister holds undisclosed shares in a company that owns a manganese mine in a remote community where locals have for years called for government testing on the mine's health impact. Chief Minister Natasha Fyles, who has also been the NT Health Minister since 2016, holds shares in the company South32, which owns the world's largest manganese mine, GEMCO, on Groote Eylandt.

[Read More](#)

Close the gap Qld: Indigenous still lagging on key measures

Adelaide Now, Other, 18/12/2023, Hayden Johnson

Queensland is failing to close the gap on major targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, a report reveals. Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships Minister Leeanne Enoch Queensland is failing to close the gap on major targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with their life expectancy lower and incarceration rates higher than non-Indigenous residents.

[Read More](#)

Radio National, Breakfast, 18/12/2023, Sally Sara

The Federal Government has announced grant funding of more than \$96m for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations addressing family, domestic and sexual violence. The Government says the applications for the grants are open until February and will help provide immediate investment in prevention services programs for First Nations women and children. Indigenous women are 34 times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be hospitalised from violence.

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OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Pill-testing at NSW festivals will save lives. So why delay?

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 19/12/2023, Alice Salomon, Page 23

When I waved my 22-year-old daughter and 18-year-old son off to the Spilt Milk music festival in the ACT recently, I was really grateful that they would be able to test their pills, if they had any. As a mum of five, I am deeply invested in the health and wellbeing of my children. I have been since those two little lines appeared on the pregnancy test.

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

Unprecedented deluge won't sink sunshine state

West Australian, Edition Changes, 19/12/2023, Madeleine Achenza and Laine Clark, Page 8

Boulders the size of houses, 100m landslides and flooding have hit parts of far north Queensland, with a third of the annual rainfall dumped on the area in just 24 hours. As areas of the north tropical coast continued to feel the aftereffects of ex-tropical cyclone Jasper, widespread heavy downpours inundated the region with flash flooding.

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Engineered stone suppliers face rocky transition after ban

Newcastle Herald, General News, 19/12/2023, Michael Parris and Jamieson Murphy, Page 5

Hunter bench-top suppliers say customers and the industry face a rocky transition away from engineered stone. Australia will ban engineered stone from July 1 to protect stone workers from silicosis, the deadly lung condition caused by inhaling silica particles during the cutting process. Business owner Kate Welsh, from Hunter Valley Granite and Marble, said more than half of her firm's work was in engineered stone. She expected much of that product to be replaced by a zero-silica alternative due to arrive from overseas in February.

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Urgent services are opening after floods in Cairns region

The Courier Mail, Other, 18/12/2023, Sandhya Ram

An urgent care, fully bulk-billed clinic offering walk-in care will be opening in Edmonton on December 19 to treat patients with non life-threatening conditions. The Cairns South Medicare Urgent Care Clinic will open seven days a week to residents impacted by the effects of ex-Tropical Cyclone Jasper and floods, and those in need of urgent care.

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

[Read More](#)

Perth nuclear waste storage facility planned for AUKUS submarines at HMAS Stirling on Garden Island

ABC Online, Other, 18/12/2023, Isabel Moussalli

Low-level radioactive waste generated by nuclear-powered submarines stationed in Perth could be stored elsewhere, WA's Premier says, despite new documents revealing plans for a local waste facility. Federal government AUKUS briefing notes obtained by the ABC reveal details of a nuclear waste storage facility being planned as part of general infrastructure works at the HMAS Stirling defence base on Garden Island, south of Perth.

[Read More](#)

US and UK nuclear waste coming here

Crikey, Other, 18/12/2023, Emma Elsworthy

Australia could start taking radioactive waste from the US and UK as early as 2027, Rex Patrick writes for after FOI-ing documents from Defence, which is somewhat at odds with Defence Minister Richard Marles' insistence that Australia will not be taking US or UK nuclear waste. The ABC continues that a "low-level radioactive waste management" facility is being planned in Perth, with Australian Submarine Agency briefing documents confirming: "All low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste will be safely stored at Defence sites in Australia."

[Read More](#)

Hundreds evacuated as flood disaster unfolds in northeastern Australia

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 18/12/2023

Stranded residents sheltered on a hospital roof as flash floods swamped northeastern Australia on Monday, with raging waters severing roads and flushing crocodiles into towns. Rescue teams evacuated more than 300 people overnight, police said, and military helicopters were dispatched to help inundated areas cut off by the floods.

Warning as Aussie man left on deathbed from mosquito bite

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 18/12/2023, Joe Attanasio

Dylan Meyer, 21, was enjoying a typical camping trip with his mates back in March at Rutherglen, in northern Victoria, when he started feeling gravely ill. The Albury man said he started to vomit uncontrollably in the days after being bitten by the mosquito and later passed out at work.

[Read More](#)

Channel 9, Today, 18/12/2023, David Campbell, Sylvia Jeffreys, Lara Vella

Floodwaters are sweeping across Far North Qld, with hundreds of thousands of residents on flood watch. Eight people are also reportedly trapped on a hospital roof in Wujal Wujal, a remote Aboriginal town between Cooktown and Port Douglas. Cairns Airport has been closed for the second time in just a matter of days after water reached the levee bank.

Similar coverage aired on: [ABC \(Brisbane\)](#).

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ABC Radio Adelaide, Breakfast, 18/12/2023, Spence Denny

Interview with UniSA Professor in Biology Craig Williams about the case of an individual catching mosquito-borne Japanese encephalitis virus after fishing in the Murray River. Williams says the whole region has been impacted by the arrival of a fairly new mosquito-borne disease in Australia. He mentions the predictions of El Niño which tends to mean fewer mosquitoes, but he says it has not looked too hot and dry recently, hence the resurgence of the insects.

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ABC Radio Sydney, Mornings, 18/12/2023, Antoinette Lattouf

Interview with University of Sydney mosquito expert Dr Cameron Webb about the summer mosquito season. Webb notes that mosquitoes also love the dry season, although it's just a different type of mosquito, and there will be a few more than usual, especially in coastal wetlands. He says there's currently no indication that there's activity of mosquito-borne diseases in NSW at the moment, but he still urges everyone not to be complacent, and avoiding mosquito bites is the best way to prevent potential mosquito-borne diseases.

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Radio National, PM, 18/12/2023, Sarah Dingle

The decision to acquire nuclear-powered submarines in Australia has sparked intense debate about the storage of nuclear waste, with recent documents showing that WA may host a facility for 'low-level radioactive waste' and up to four US submarines by 2027. Dr Marcus Hellyer from Strategic Analysis Australia highlights the challenge of managing low-level nuclear waste from submarines. The documents reference Submarine Rotational Force West, proposing the stationing of US and British submarines at HMAS Stirling. Planning is underway for radioactive waste management, and over 700 American personnel could be based in the state to support the nuclear submarines, presenting potential economic benefits for WA.

Report continues on: [Radio National \(Canberra\)](#).

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Positive drug trials send Neuren shares soaring

The Australian, Business News, 19/12/2023, Louise Brannelly, Page 20

Neuren Pharmaceuticals shares rocketed almost 30 per cent on Monday on the back of positive Phase

2 clinical trials for one of the biotech star's most promising drugs. The stock, which was the best performer on the S&P/ASX 200, jumped \$5.06 to a record closing high of \$22.20 after coming out of a trading halt it went into on Thursday.

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Tool up on antibiotics

Herald Sun, General News, 19/12/2023, Page 7

An algorithm-based digital tool could help doctors treat sick children without prescribing unnecessary antibiotics, according to Swiss researchers who say their tool could help curb the growing problem of antibiotic resistance. The University of Lausanne researchers tested the algorithm across 20 health facilities in Tanzania.

Also reported by: [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#)

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ASX health stocks: Neuren soars 30pc in early Christmas present after Phase 2 trial success

The Australian, Other, 18/12/2023, Nadine Mcgrath

Christmas has come early for 2023 biotech sector market darling Neuren Pharmaceuticals (ASX:NEU as it soared about 30 per cent in Monday morning trade on positive results from its Phase 2 trial of NNZ-2591 in children with Phelan-McDermid syndrome (PMS). It was still up by 25.7 per cent for the day at 3pm (AEDT). In its announcement, NEU said significant improvement had been observed by both clinicians and caregivers from treatment, across multiple efficacy measures.

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Syringe shortage

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 18/12/2023

Pfizer Australia has notified the TGA last week of a shortage of both strengths of Bicillin L-A (benzathine benzylpenicillin tetrahydrate) prefilled syringes for injection (600,000 units per syringe and 1.2 million units per syringe). Pfizer Australia has advised the TGA that these shortages will continue into 2024.

[Read More](#)

Compounding weight loss

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 18/12/2023

Widespread demand for diabetes drugs such as Ozempic and Mounjaro has allegedly tested the exemption, given by the TGA for medicines approvals, to compounding pharmacies who are now producing replica weight loss medications on a large scale, ABC has reported. It identified at least seven compounding pharmacies and telehealth companies that have been quietly selling off-brand versions of the popular weight loss medications and shipping them to consumers across Australia for months.

[Read More](#)

Channel 7, Seven News, 18/12/2023, Mark Ferguson

The controversial trend of IV therapy is gaining popularity among clients who are willing to pay hundreds of dollars for promised benefits. However, medical professionals are sceptical about the actual value of these treatments. The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency has issued a warning, emphasising that IV infusions are invasive procedures carrying inherent health and safety risks, though providers argue that their patients are experiencing benefits. The Therapeutic Goods Administration has declined to comment but maintains that IV drips must undergo formal registration before use in Australia.

Also reported by: [Channel 7 \(Melbourne\)](#), [Channel 7 \(Adelaide\)](#), [Channel 7 \(Brisbane\)](#), [Channel 7 \(Perth\)](#)

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Channel 7, Sunrise, 18/12/2023, Monique Wright and Matt Shirvington

Interview with Monash University Professor of Physiology Michael Cowley about the surge in

overdoses from the weight loss drug Ozempic, with 120 calls being made to the NSW Poisons Information Centre. Cowley says there are more severe side effects in some patients, adding that the drug is extremely widely used so even rare side effects are going to occur more frequently as more people take the drug. He explains that taking too much Ozempic can lead to stronger versions of the usual side effects, such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or constipation, commonly experienced by many patients.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Breakfast, 18/12/2023, John X

Interview with Cosmos Magazine science writer Matthew Agius about the controversy surrounding the drug Ozempic, which is actually prescribed for diabetes. The drug has been named Science's 2023 Breakthrough of the Year, with weight loss being its side effect. Agius says Ozempic, while a diabetes medication, has a new version on the market, called Wegovy which has a higher dosage formulation of semaglutide. He says the drug helps better regulate blood sugar levels and insulin, and in the case of weight loss, it makes people feel full so they're less likely to eat. He emphasises that prescription medication should come with exercise and a healthy diet.

Interview continues on: [ABC Radio Hobart \(Hobart\)](#).

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OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

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FOOD STANDARDS

Radio National, Life Matters, 18/12/2023, Hilary Harper and Michael Mackenzie

Interview with fermentation expert Sharon Flynn, who authors a new book called Wild Drinks: The New Old World of Small-Batch Brews, Ferments and Infusions. Flynn says learning how to make fermented drinks like kombucha, cider, mead and kvass will not only bring more pleasure to people's palettes but will help them connect with feminist history, the wonders of physics and their hunter-gatherer instincts. She mentions that according to Australian health and food safety guidelines, fermented drinks with 1.15% alcohol content or less are considered sodas and non-alcoholic.

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