



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Friday, 12th January 2024

A more automated version of *Today's News* will be provided on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. It will still capture the main media stories, but will not include an Executive Summary. The report will be emailed to subscribers at the later time of 7:30 am.

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [Sydney Morning Herald](#) (page 1) reports women in cardiac arrest are 50 per cent less likely to be defibrillated than men because bystanders are uncomfortable touching breasts, new research by the Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute and Ambulance Victoria has found. *Also reported by:* [The Age](#)
- The [Sydney Morning Herald](#) (page 1) reports a recycled mulch that returned multiple samples of asbestos in Sydney's Rozelle Park is "commercially available and widely used", Transport for NSW secretary Josh Murray has warned.
- The [Herald Sun](#) (page 1) reports instances of melanoma in Victoria are expected to rise between 24 and 69 per cent over the next decade due to a lack of diagnosis and preventative care, health experts say. *Also reported by:* [Adelaide Advertiser](#), [Hobart Mercury](#), [Geelong Advertiser](#)

- The [Adelaide Advertiser](#) (page 1) reports ramped ambulance patients are not receiving priority care, an inquiry into South Australia's hospitals has found, but clinicians say they are being pressured by bureaucrats. *Also reported by:* [9News](#), [Canberra Times](#), [ABC News](#), [5AA](#)
- The [Courier Mail](#) (page 1) reports almost three-quarters of Queensland's aged care residents have not had a COVID booster in the past six months, leading to a surge in hospitalisations across the state. *Also reported by:* [Cairns Post](#), [Townsville Bulletin](#)
- The [Courier Mail](#) (page 1) reports Queensland's rate of long-stay hospital patients has risen 36 per cent compared to 2022, with the state blaming a lack of federal funding for alternative accommodation for NDIS patients. *Also reported by:* [Courier Mail](#)
- The [Hobart Mercury](#) (page 1) reports COVID RATs are scarce in Tasmania, with pharmacies struggling to get stock from manufacturers, while the state's COVID cases have steadily increased since October. *Also reported by:* [Hobart Mercury](#)
- [The Australian](#) (page 3) reports scientists are calling for the use of genomic medicine in cancer care to be fast-tracked following groundbreaking UK research showing the benefits of personalised treatments.
- [The Australian](#) (page 5) reports the Minister for Health's office has dismissed opposition criticism of Dr Angela Jackson amidst calls to expand the scope of the Commonwealth's inquiry into the COVID-19 pandemic.

MINISTER BUTLER

Doubts over independence of Labor's Covid inquiry

The Australian, General News, 12/01/2024, Joe Kelly, Page 5

The Coalition has called on Anthony Albanese to expand the scope of his Covid-19 inquiry, arguing former Labor premiers Daniel Andrews and Annastacia Palaszczuk should "publicly testify to the pandemic decisions they made" following their resignations. [...] A spokeswoman for Health Minister Mark Butler said Dr Jackson was a "very widely renowned economist with a particular focus on health economics".

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

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GPs want support for flood victims

Parramatta Times, General News, 01/01/2024, Page 10

The Royal Australian College of GPs (RACGP) urges government support for GPs and teams aiding flood-affected communities, emphasising mental health care. RACGP Vice President Dr Michael Clements has requested additional resources from Federal Health Minister Mark Butler and Queensland Health Minister Shannon Fentiman.

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

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One in five vapers say they will swap to cigarettes if disposable vapes vanish

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 12/01/2024

One in five vapers would revert to smoking cigarettes if the government's new ban makes it impossible to get their hands on black market products, a study has claimed. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler unveiled a suite of new graphic warning labels for nicotine products last month, warning that Australians had become desensitised to warning labels and images that have adorned smoking packets since 2011.

[Read More](#)

Richard Taylor: Government cost-cutting means rural mental health suffers

West Australian, Other, 11/01/2024, Richard Taylor

Where I'm from, in the WA wheatbelt, farmers are at the mercy of a hostile climate, economic uncertainty, surging costs of living and business, supply chain disruption, and international hostilities. They are reaching breaking point. [...] As a clinical psychologist with a bulk billing practice, I have had many patients reach Mark Butler's psychological cliff after he slashed Medicare rebated sessions from 20 to 10 sessions.

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'Patients will suffer': urgent call to retain East Devonport GP services

The Advocate (Burnie), Other, 11/01/2024, Libby Bingham

Six thousand patients at East Devonport will lose their only GP practice in just three weeks. The head of the state's peak doctor union says at least six GPs are needed to cater to the high health needs of a disadvantaged community, however, the East Devonport Medical Centre (EDMC) is set to close on February 3 due to a shortage of doctors. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said "after a decade of cuts and neglect by the former Liberal Government it had never been harder to see a bulk billing GP".

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

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Boost for Men's Sheds

Coast Community News, Other, 11/01/2024

Kincumber Men's Shed and St Joseph's Workshop at West Gosford have received funding from the Federal Labor Government to continue supporting the health and wellbeing of men in the community. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the sheds are helping men and boys find mateship and social support to help them stay mentally and physically healthy.

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Health minister Mark Butler hits back after Daily Mail revealed how easy it is to get around his new vape crackdown

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 11/01/2024, Olivia Day

Health minister Mark Butler has warned businesses selling illegal vapes that they're going to have to find another way to make money - and hit back at suggestions they should be regulated in the same way as alcohol and tobacco. His warning comes after Daily Mail Australia proved just how easy it was to buy one of the illicit devices despite his import ban on disposable vapes coming into force on January 1.

[Read More](#)

Dr Kerry Chant issues a mask warning as Covid rates soar in New South Wales

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 11/01/2024, Madeleine Achenza and Duncan Murray

New South Wales Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant has asked people testing positive with Covid-19 to wear masks in supermarkets in a press conference on Thursday morning. COVID-19 rates have hit a 'high' in NSW over the last two weeks, with health authorities suggesting it may surpass numbers recorded as emerging variant JN. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler described the summer increase as part of a 'regular cycle' of waves caused by new Omicron sub-variants.

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

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The alarming way Australia's vape addiction is killing dogs - as Abbie Chatfield slams her co-host who won't quit the habit

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 11/01/2024, Monique Friedlander

An Australian health expert has shared health dangers that vapes pose to household pets. Claire Wakefield, a researcher and psychologist from the Minderoo Foundation, appeared on Abbie Chatfield's Its A Lot podcast to discuss the vaping epidemic that is sweeping the country. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler only announced the measure on November 28, arguing they were needed to stop teenagers from getting hooked on nicotine.

Covid infections rise in Sydney as JN.1 variant drives cases across Australia

The Guardian, Other, 11/01/2024, Melissa Davey

COVID-19 infections in the greater Sydney area are approaching levels not seen since December 2022 as the JN.1 variant continues to drive cases throughout Australia, but hospital presentations and admissions have reduced since late 2023. [...] On Tuesday the federal health minister, Mark Butler, said the cases throughout Australia were "not surprising really, given the degree to which people come together over the Christmas and New Year period to celebrate the festive season".

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Doctors fear 'looming crisis' in palliative care as opioid options dry up

Australian Doctor, Other, 11/01/2024, Paul Smith

Doctors have warned the Federal Government that it needs to act to stop a looming crisis in palliative care and pain management due to clinicians' decreasing access to vital opioid analgesics. [...] Dr Mott said the Federal Government needed to consider legislation to double the current mandated six-month time frame for drug companies to notify the TGA of medication withdrawals.

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All up in smoke

My Weekly Preview, Other, 11/01/2024

Australia is losing ground on tobacco control, lagging behind the rest of the world, as vaping and cigarette marketers up their game. It's no secret that e-cigarettes are a dangerous and addictive trend among our youth. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler says the laws are needed to ensure a generation of new smokers do not start.

[Read More](#)

3AW, Breakfast, 11/01/2024, Ross Stevenson and Russel Howcroft

Interview with Dr Sandro Demaio, CEO, VicHealth, regarding Victorian children as young as eight being offered e-cigarettes, and 10yos are calling the quit line in tears. Demaio says the industry is targeting people children as young as possible to get them addicted as early as possible. He adds the industry has used several loopholes which have recently been closed by the new legislation from the Federal Government, including Health Minister Mark Butler just a few weeks ago but it is going to take time to come into effect.

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5AA, 15:00 News, 11/01/2024

There have been more complaints about how the new urgent care clinics are working in SA. They're meant to open seven days a week from 8am to 10pm, but many aren't. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says it's a new model of healthcare and we need to give it time.

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5AA, Breakfast, 11/01/2024, Will Goodings and David Penberthy

Interview with Mark Butler, Federal Health Minister, on criticism surrounding the Federal Government's urgent care clinics that were launched to take pressure off EDs. Butler says it's working tremendously well despite some clinics which have only been open for a few weeks, aren't yet operating all of the hours that they committed to in the election. He adds that in South Australia, the Northern and West Marion Clinics are open till 8 pm, seven days a week.

Interview continues on: [5AA \(Adelaide\)](#), [5AA \(Adelaide\)](#).

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MINISTER WELLS

4BC, Breakfast , 11/01/2024, Peter Fagan

Fagan says Federal Sports Minister Anika Wells has not talked about the Olympic Games for quite some time because it's a mess. He adds no politician wants to touch it but Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner is the only one that has the guts to come out and say, stop the politics.

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CORONAVIRUS

Lessons from being locked down

The Australian, General News, 12/01/2024, Christine Middap, Page 11

There was much to learn from the pandemic to prepare us for next time From pandemic preparedness, financial support, mixed messaging, lockdown overreach and keeping children out of schools, here's what the Covid-19 pandemic has taught us as we look to the future.

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

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Rat race rerun

Hobart Mercury, General News, 12/01/2024, Blair Richards, Page 1

Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) for Covid are becoming hard to get in Tasmania as pharmacies struggle to get supplies from manufacturers. While Service Tasmania has a limited supply of free tests for concession card holders, everyone else relies on being able to buy a test from a pharmacy. However Pharmacy Guild of Tasmania president Helen O'Byrne said a shortage was impacting pharmacies across the state.

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

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All you need to know about new strain JN. 1: Surprise group that appears less likely to catch Covid

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 11/01/2024, Mandy Squires

The new Covid strain sweeping Victoria and causing hundreds of hospitalisations daily has "enhanced immune evasion capabilities" according to the World Health Organisation, which is closely monitoring its global spread. Here's what we know about mutant JN.1.

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

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Australia's long COVID response lagging, study finds

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 11/01/2024, Anmj Staff

Australia's long covid response is falling short of international standards and needs an urgent overhaul, a new study has warned. The RMIT University and Northern Health research examined the country's long COVID services, guidelines, and public health information, compared to international standards, finding Australia is lacking in several categories.

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Channel 9, National Nine News, 11/01/2024, Georgie Gardner

There are concerns the return to the office from the summer break will further fuel a COVID-19 wave, which has seen infections soar to levels not seen in a year. NSW Health Minister Ryan Park advises people to don't go to work if they are not feeling well and to stay away from aged care homes.

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Channel 9, National Nine News, 11/01/2024, Brenton Ragless and Kate Collins

SA's COVID-19 cases continue to climb and GPs say they struggle to keep up. The Australian Medical Association slammed the government's new requirement that a GP referral be needed for a PCR test, saying it's adding extra strain to a sector already in crisis.

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5AA, Mornings, 11/01/2024, Matthew Pantelis

Interview with Dr John Williams, President, AMA SA. Williams says people should remain cautious as COVID-19 case numbers rise again. He adds immunisations are important, especially for the elderly and those with immunosuppression. Williams says it's important for people to see their GPs to discuss that.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Human life expectancy the ultimate age-old question

The Australian, General News, 12/01/2024, Jamie Walker, Page 11

First the good news. People are living longer than ever and, as Australians, we are near the top of the league table internationally for life expectancy. Many more of us will be seeing our ninth decade and beyond. A girl born today can count on living for 85.2 years, a boy for 81.3 years. By 2063, average life expectancy will increase by five years in a big Australia of 40 million people, according to the government's recent Intergenerational Report.

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

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Covid-19 jab rate alarm on elderly

The majority of the most vulnerable Queenslanders living in aged-care facilities are missing out on vital Covid-19 booster vaccinations. The low jab rates have shocked chief health officer Dr John Gerrard, who has confirmed that more than 70 per cent of the 300 Queenslanders hospitalised with the virus are aged over 65.

Also reported by: [Cairns Post \(Cairns\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Your Life Choices \(Online\)](#).

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In-house dental clinic put the priority on oral health for residents

HelloCare, Other, 11/01/2024, Bianca Iovino

If you talk to any dentist, you'll find out that maintaining good oral health is vital as we age, as our risk of developing certain oral health conditions increases and diseases like dementia could impact one's ability to look after their mouth independently. For those living in aged care, maintaining appointments outside of the facility can be difficult if they become sick or unable to get there this was particularly common during the COVID-19 pandemic when several restrictions were in place.

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How Benevolent Living is meeting new registered nurse requirements

Morning Bulletin, Other, 11/01/2024, Vanessa Jarrett

Here's how this Rockhampton facility is trying to fulfil new legislation for registered nurses, including \$10,000 sign-on bonuses and recruiting workers from Fiji. Sponsoring nurses from overseas, recruitment of workers from Fiji, temporary agency nurses and \$10,000 sign-on bonuses are just some of the ways one Rockhampton aged care provider are trying to fill the new 24/

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POPULATION HEALTH

Eyes suffer from screen use

Border Watch, General News, 12/01/2024, Page 13

New research has found the younger generation is spending three times the amount on screens as recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Generation Alpha is spending an average of 3.5 hours per day on screens both at home and at school which could potentially impact their eye health and increase chances of lifelong vision and learning issues.

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Car park safety key in heat

Shepparton News, General News, 12/01/2024, Page 10

With summer's arrival, Victorians are being urged to adopt precautions against extreme heat and the risks of leaving children in cars. Victorian Ambulance Services Minister Mary Anne Thomas, alongside Ambulance Victoria and Kidsafe, launched campaigns focusing on these critical safety issues.

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Victoria launches vape dangers campaign as children call Quitline over addictions

9News, Other, 11/01/2024

Children in Victoria are being offered vapes while others are calling Quitline in the grips of an addiction, as the extent of the problem in the state is revealed. Victoria has introduced a new education program to reduce vaping in school kids in years 7 to 10, in a desperate move to counteract the harmful effects of the behaviour.

Also reported by: [Shepparton News Online \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [Channel 10 \(Melbourne\)](#).

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Almost one in 10 teens have tried an unapproved weight loss product, new study finds

9News, Other, 11/01/2024, Josh Hohne

Parents and experts have long worried over teenagers using non-prescribed methods for losing weight , but until now, they had no idea just how common the practice was. An Australian study claims almost one in ten teenagers had used ineffective and potentially harmful weight-loss products like diuretics, laxatives, or diet pills in their lifetime.

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We need to talk about why millennials are ageing better than Gen Z.

Mamamia, Other, 11/01/2024, Erin Docherty

While millennials have copped it on everything from their dance moves and their social media mannerisms to how they wear their socks , there's one thing they're apparently really good at: ageing. Because according to cosmetic experts, millennials may actually look younger than the generations before them — including baby boomers and Generation X — as well as the generations after them, like Gen Z.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Push for genome cancer progress

The Australian, General News, 12/01/2024, Natasha Robinson, Page 3

Australian scientists are calling for the country to urgently fast track moves to implement genomic medicine in clinical cancer care after a landmark study in the UK revealed widespread genetic variations that were common across some of the most deadly cancers, paving the way for personalised treatment. The findings from the study led by Genomics England, based on the biggest cancer genomics database in the world, established that combining health data with whole genome sequence data in patients with cancer could help doctors provide more tailored care for their patients.

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

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Breasts stop cardiac arrest help

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 12/01/2024, Henrietta Cook, Page 1

Women experiencing cardiac arrest are half as likely to receive defibrillation from bystanders than men, with researchers linking this gap to people's discomfort touching breasts. New research from the Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute and Ambulance Victoria found that 5 per cent of women who had a cardiac arrest in 2020-21 received defibrillation from a bystander, compared with 10 per cent of men.

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

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Save your skin

Herald Sun, General News, 12/01/2024, Sarah Booth, Page 1

Deadly skin cancer diagnoses are expected to rise by up to 69 per cent in Victoria over the next decade, with experts urging the community to stop underestimating the sun's deadly UV rays. Nearly all melanomas are preventable, but the latest Victorian Cancer Registry (VCR) report shows diagnoses were expected to rise by 24 to 69 per cent over 10 years as our ageing population grows.

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

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Clinic fails to meet demand on privacy

Burnie Advocate, General News, 12/01/2024, Jess Flint, Page 1

It can be difficult at the best of times to discuss medical problems with a medical practitioner but a

patient at the Devonport Community Health Centre found herself in the awkward position of discussing her most private parts within earshot of other patients. Cancer survivor Vicki Purnell feels obligated to speak out about genital swelling - a problem not often talked about in polite society - after an encounter with her physiotherapist in a public consultation room left her feeling embarrassed.

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Bulldogs, Blues join forces for a cause

Daily Advertiser, General News, 12/01/2024, Jimmy Meiklejohn, Page 46

Wagga rsl and South Wagga will join forces this weekend for a very worthy cause as they look to raise money for the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia. The two rival clubs will unite for a Ladies Day fundraiser and Bulldogs captain-coach Sam Perry said it was fantastic they could join together with the Blues to raise money for a very worthy cause.

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

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Tests reduce breast cancer treatment

The Senior, Other, 11/01/2024, Therese Murray

New research shows that the use of breast magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) before surgery may identify patients who can safely avoid radiotherapy. It could also save thousands of dollars in healthcare costs. The primary results for the PROSPECT clinical trial provide evidence for a new treatment approach that may benefit both patients and the health system alike.

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PRIMARY CARE

No 'special treatment' for ambos

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 12/01/2024, Brad Crouch, Page 1

An independent review has found that ambulance patients are not being given priority over those waiting in emergency departments. SA Salaried Medical Officers Association president Dr David Pope told The Advertiser in December that clinicians were "intimidated" into giving ramped ambulance patients priority over sicker patients, resulting in deaths.

Also reported by: [9News \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [ABC News \(Sydney\)](#), [5AA \(Adelaide\)](#).

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New corrections minister eyes better health supports

Canberra Times, General News, 12/01/2024, Jasper Lindell, Page 16

The ACT's new Corrections Minister wants improved health support for prisoners in the territory, and a boost to assistance when detainees are released into the community. Emma Davidson, who was handed the corrections portfolio in a cabinet reshuffle in December, said she wanted to strengthen the links between corrections authorities and community health providers, and said there were "questions to be answered" over the way the government was handling Indigenous over-representation in the justice system.

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Funds fail clogs beds

Courier Mail, General News, 12/01/2024, Hayden Johnson and Judith Kerr, Page 1

Hundreds of young Queenslanders are languishing in desperately needed hospital beds as a lack of federal NDIS funding prevents them leaving. As of November 29, there were 863 long-stay patients in Queensland hospitals equal to almost filling the Rockhampton, Toowoomba and Redcliffe hospitals combined. The number of affected patients is also up 36 per cent compared to the same time in 2022.

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

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LNP to rename satellite clinics

Courier Mail, General News, 12/01/2024, Stephanie Bennett, Page 4

The LNP would rename the state's seven satellite hospitals should they win the October election over fears the label has led to serious confusion among patients and doctors. But the state government has reiterated "hospital" in the naming of the sites designed to treat patients with "minor injuries and illnesses" with Deputy Premier Cameron Dick insisting "that's what they are". [...] "Despite the name, these satellite hospitals don't provide the services that hospitals provide," Australian Medical Association (AMA) of Queensland president Maria Boulton said.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Channel 9 \(Brisbane\)](#).

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Pill-testing and assisted dying not right for our kids

Daily Telegraph, General News, 12/01/2024, Louise Roberts, Page 13

Pregnant with my first child, a son, I was offered the best indication of how I would feel as a new mum. If required, you will lie on that road there in front of an oncoming bus to protect him, my friend concluded as she indicated a stretch of bitumen before us. One hundred per cent. My first child is now 19 and that protective purpose has not wavered.

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Elective surgery backlog

Border Watch, General News, 12/01/2024, Charlotte Varcoe, Page 4

Patients residing in the Limestone Coast Local Health Network (LCLHN) catchment area will continue to wait for metropolitan elective surgeries, with 29 per cent classified as overdue. Across the state, there are 3718 patients residing in South Australian regional local health network catchment areas who are ready for care on a metropolitan health network surgery waitlist.

Also reported by: [Border Watch \(Online\)](#).

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\$24m upgrades for hospital

Border Watch, General News, 12/01/2024, Charlotte Varcoe, Page 6

Plans have been released for the \$24m Mount Gambier and District Hospital upgrades with community members able to have their say. Upgrades include a new mental health unit, a new car park, upgrades to the cancer care centre, drug and alcohol unit, SA Pathology and the previously announced emergency department short stay unit.

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Will wishes come true?

Daily Mercury, General News, 12/01/2024, Fergus Gregg, Page 1

The residents of the Mackay and Whitsunday regions have made their voices heard in a recent survey asking them what developments they would like to see started in 2024. [...] Proserpine and Bowen hospitals will receive upgrades, particularly to their renal services as part of the state-funded Rural and Regional Renal program.

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Inquest to probe VAD drug scheme

Daily Mercury, General News, 12/01/2024, Janessa Ekert, Page 5

Euthanasia drugs and how they are dispensed will be the focus of an inquest before the Central Coroner after an elderly widower took a lethal dose prescribed for their terminally ill partner, in what is the first suspected abuse of the voluntary assisted dying scheme. The terminally ill partner had been approved to legally end her life under Queensland's VAD laws, however, their health deteriorated and they died in hospital without taking the drugs, which had been provided to them.

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Many wellbeing perks a waste of money: research

Australian Financial Review, General News, 12/01/2024, Euan Black, Page 8

Employers who are serious about improving the wellbeing of staff must tackle the root causes of stress instead of relying on "easy actions" such as offering free access to health apps and mindfulness workshops.

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Too many children fall through cracks

Canberra Times, General News, 12/01/2024, Carly Dober, Page 66

The current state of accessibility and affordability to psychology services, in particular for neurodiverse families, is a matter of pressing concern and demands immediate attention and action. The Australian Association of Psychologists Incorporated stands in firm agreement with the need for enhanced screening, assessment and treatment support for neurodiverse children, as pointed out in these pages.

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

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Psychedelic drug trial to treat depression

West Australian, Business News, 12/01/2024, Page 47

Little Green Pharma's psychedelics arm has kicked off a clinical trial using psilocybin for patients with treatment-resistant depression. LGP on Thursday announced the study by Reset Mind Sciences, which will investigate the efficacy and safety of psilocybin-assisted therapy for patients with major depressive disorder.

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Mental health grants awarded

Shepparton News, General News, 12/01/2024, Grace Carter, Page 10

Twenty community-led organisations across Victoria will share in funding worth \$4.2 million as recipients of the 2023/25 Diverse Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Grants. The Victorian Government is aiming to build a more accessible mental health system for Victorians by awarding grants to organisations that support people with disabilities and multifaith, multicultural and LGBTIQ+ communities.

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12 hours, 100km: How a life-changing ordeal sparked a lifesaving challenge

The Courier Mail, Other, 11/01/2024, Grace Hamilton

The countdown is on. In 24 hours, Gold Coast-based runner James 'Jimmy' Kirker will set off on the challenge of a lifetime. Raising funds for and awareness of mental illness, Kirker will run 100km overnight with a target to finish in under 14 hours.

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Too much lead, copper in McKellar Mental Health and Wellbeing Centre water

Geelong Advertiser, Other, 11/01/2024, Tamara McDonald

Bottled water is being given out at a new mental health facility in North Geelong after its water was found to be contaminated. Barwon Health became aware of water quality issues at the 16-bed McKellar Mental Health and Wellbeing Centre, opened in 2022, late last year. It's understood sample tests showed copper and lead levels slightly above recommended drinking levels.

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The loneliness epidemic

Medical Forum, Other, 11/01/2024

With the recent Christmas and New Year's celebrations drawing people's focus back to family and friends, Perth researchers are shining a light on loneliness. The issue of loneliness has been described by one of the first research papers of 2024 as a looming public health epidemic especially among young people.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

Mums' bundle of bad advice

Herald Sun, General News, 12/01/2024, Mandy Squires, Page 11

"Freebirthing" is being pushed on social media to Victorian women by zealots of the potentially dangerous practice including to mothers who have had past caesarean sections and those with breech babies. Women are also being told an umbilical cord around a baby's neck is not a risk in freebirthing, leading to warnings over the "most unwise" advice.

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Top nurse says claims motivated by politics

West Australian, General News, 12/01/2024, Geof Parry, Page 3

Complaints concerning one of WA's most powerful union officials are under investigation, alleging a shocking breach of patient trust. Australian Nursing Federation secretary Janet Reah is at the centre of complaints made to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency alleging that she shared sensitive X-rays and medical records on social media while working in a hospital.

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Climate change impacting babies' birthweight for gestational age

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 11/01/2024, Anmj Staff

Climate change may pose a risk to Australians' reproductive health with new research showing a link between extreme bioclimatic exposure during pregnancy and babies' birthweights for gestational age. The large-scale Curtin University study examined more than 385,000 pregnancies in Western Australia between 2000 and 2015, from 12 weeks prior to conception until birth.

Also reported by: [Medical Forum \(Online\)](#).

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

'I'll be dead by 4pm'

Daily Telegraph, General News, 12/01/2024, Clementine Cuneo, Page 1

A fake lawyer shot dead by police after he wielded a gun inside a medical centre told his doctor he would be "dead by 4pm". Alexander Stuart Pinnock, 34, made the chilling remark during a consultation with his longtime GP on Wednesday, moments before producing what appeared to be a Glock pistol, and sparking a two-hour siege that ended in gunfire.

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

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

Bendigo Health welcomes 40 new student doctors

Bendigo Advertiser, General News, 12/01/2024, Ben Loughran, Page 3

Bendigo Health will train up more than 40 interns this year to boost the prospect of recruiting doctors to central Victoria. The student doctors will continue to learn all facets of the industry over the next 12 months where they will undergo five rotations across different specialties, including emergency medicine and surgical training.

GPs are facing extinction: It's time for a rebellion

Australian Doctor, Other, 11/01/2024, Heather McNamee

More than a year has passed since publication of the AMA report projecting a "staggering" GP shortage in the next decade. At the time, it grabbed headlines with calculations that the current rate of GP training and recruitment would leave Australia short of 10,600 GPs by 2031.

[Read More](#)

CAPS slams funding cuts to Supercare

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 11/01/2024

With the last of the Supercare Pharmacies closing their 24-hour pharmacy services throughout Victoria, the Community and Pharmacy Support Group (CAPS) has once again "condemned" the state gov't's decision to cut funding. CAPS stated that these cuts have made it "impossible" for pharmacies to sustain the extended hours, leaving Victorians with "no option" of accessible medication and advice from any pharmacies after hours (PD 05 Jan).

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

PBAC wants COVID-19 antiviral prescribing rules tightened as cost reaches \$1 billion

Australian Doctor, Other, 11/01/2024, Antony Scholefield

The pbac has warned that the \$981 million annual cost of subsidising COVID-19 antivirals must be curbed with stricter PBS criteria or price cuts for the manufacturers. Doctors wrote nearly 873,000 scripts for monlupiravir (Lagevrio) and nirmatrelvir–ritonavir (Paxlovid) last financial year, costing taxpayers over \$1100 per script.

[Read More](#)

A need to be more discrete

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 11/01/2024, Chris Brooker

Guidelines for pharmacists dispensing opioids may need to be more specific to aid in reducing opioid-related harms, say researchers. Gaps in existing guidelines may be preventing pharmacists from fulfilling their responsibilities when dispensing opioid medicines, say Australian researchers.

[Read More](#)

Vic Govt extends continued dispensing

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 11/01/2024

The Victorian Govt has expanded continued dispensing measures in response to widespread flooding in the state's central region. Introduction of the Public Health Emergency Order 25 yesterday aligns with the Commonwealth Govt's National Health (Continued Dispensing) Determination made in Dec 2023, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) stated. [...] "The PSA firmly believes that all PBS General Schedule medicines should be permanently included in continued dispensing arrangements to avoid delays in emergency situations," Sim concluded.

Also reported by: [Australian Journal of Pharmacy \(Online\)](#)

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

Costs row on NDIS 'failing children'

The Australian, General News, 12/01/2024, Stephen Lunn, Page 4

Tens of thousands of children with disabilities are being denied their best start in life through a proper education as state and federal governments look to push responsibility and costs into either the National Disability Insurance Scheme or state education budgets, a key disability reformer warns. In his first interview since handing down the NDIS review in early December, review cochair Bruce Bonyhady said improving the education of children with disability should be a critical short-term priority for both tiers of government.

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

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

NDIS help on release

Northern Territory News, General News, 12/01/2024, Zizi Averill, Page 7

Life after lockup for Territorians with a disability may soon be a little easier as the Justice Department commits to improving post-release coordination. Corrections Commissioner Matthew Varley said he aimed to increase the number of prisoners leaving with formalised disability funding plans over the next 12 months.

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

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ABC News, ABC Nightly News, 11/01/2024, Yvonne Yong

The rollout of the NT Government's new digital health platform at two hospitals has been slammed by staff in emergency departments. It's prompted moves to partly wind back its use until technical issues are resolved.

[Play Now](#)

2CC, Breakfast, 11/01/2024, Stephen Cenatiempo

Interview with Dr Nicole Higgins, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, on the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia and the RACGP warning the government's proposal to remove a seven-day delay for all pathology and diagnostic imaging reports on the My Health Record may lead to misinformation and patient distress. Higgins says the seven-day delay gives a patient the time to have a chat with their doctor about what the results are and what it means, etc.

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Clinical nurse wins appeal

Courier Mail, General News, 12/01/2024, Patrick Billings, Page 22

A Queensland Health nurse facing disciplinary action over using a public toilet and later clashing with a member of the public has won an appeal. Nambour Adult Community Mental Health Service clinical nurse James Baker was facing possible termination over a series of events on the Sunshine Coast on November 29, 2022.

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

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Nurse sacked over vaccine mandate threatens legal action against Grace Grace

The Courier Mail, Other, 11/01/2024, Jackie Sinnerton

A pregnant nurse who was terminated two years after failing to comply with Queensland Health's vaccine mandate is planning to take legal action against Minister Grace Grace for her "misleading" comments made about her case. Ella King, who now works for the government's rival "red union" The

Nurses Professional Association of Queensland (NPAQ), said she would be litigating based on unfair dismissal and is seeking clarification on Ms Grace's comments.

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

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Australian Nursing Federation secretary Janet Reah under investigation for allegedly sharing medical records

West Australian, Other, 11/01/2024, Geof Parry

Complaints concerning one of WA's most powerful union officials are under investigation tonight, alleging a shocking breach of patient trust. Australian Nursing Federation secretary Janet Reah is at the centre of complaints made to federal regulator AHPRA alleging she shared sensitive x-rays and medical records on social media while working in a hospital.

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Mandurah pharmacist Lauren Murray banned for misconduct after helping herself to opioid medication

West Australian, Other, 11/01/2024

A rogue pharmacist working across several Mandurah outlets has been banned for 18 months after helping herself to prescription-only opioid medicines and handing them out to others. Lauren Murray was a casual worker at Priceline Pharmacy Lakelands, Optimal Pharmacy Plus Meadow Springs and the Bridge 7 Day Pharmacy Mandurah, between November 2020 and April 2021, when she dispensed the medications.

[Read More](#)

GP who says he didn't recognise patient before sex cleared of allegations of professional misconduct

ABC Online, Other, 11/01/2024, Emily Baker

A GP accused of raping his patient in a pub toilet has been cleared of allegations of professional misconduct and found to have "no case to answer". Dr Rizwan Sami had consulted with the unnamed patient 10 times over two years — including three and a half weeks before the pair's encounter at the Esplanade Hotel in St Kilda.

[Read More](#)

Family of Adelaide man who died after 10-hour ambulance wait say premier has 'failed' to fix ramping

7news.com.au, Other, 11/01/2024, Hayden Nelson

The family of a disabled man who died after an agonising wait for an ambulance in Adelaide's east has hit out at the state government and is furious no one has taken responsibility for his death. Eddie Fitchett, 54, took his last breath at his Hectorville care home on December 27, despite three calls to emergency services across 10 hours.

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

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Family fights removal of NDIS funding for registered nurse in Melbourne disability facility

ABC Online, Other, 11/01/2024, Richard Willingham

Nearly 18 years ago, doctors told Robyn Brewin that her son James would probably only live another three to five years after he suffered a catastrophic brain injury during an unprovoked assault while he was out celebrating his 20th birthday. But James Macready-Bryan has defied those medical odds, living in a special accommodation for young people with acquired brain injuries in Melbourne, where a registered nurse is always present.

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Pathologists back GP's concerns over real-time results

The Medical Republic, Other, 11/01/2024, Laura Woodrow

The pathology college supports the RACGP's bid to keep the seven-day delay on the release of My Health Record reports. While GPs and pathologists alike are on board for better patient access to pathology results, immediate access without the opportunity to discuss results with a doctor could lead to panic, the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia and the RACGP have said in a joint statement.

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SPORT

Up next, the Aussie Demon who dares to dream of Open glory

The Australian, General News, 12/01/2024, Will Swanton, Page 1

Alex de Minaur's on the up and up. Up the rankings. Up in people's estimations. Up among the genuine contenders for the Australian Open. Everything's pointing in the right direction. And the bloke's all heart. He'll be up and at 'em at Melbourne Park. "I'm ready to get started, to be honest," de Minaur says.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#).

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How Serena's mentor would coach 'complicated' Kyrgios

Age, General News, 12/01/2024, Greg Baum, Page 1

Legendary French tennis coach and entrepreneur Patrick Mouratoglou says finding a way to ease the pressure on Nick Kyrgios could help make him a grand slam winner, while Alex de Minaur has the growth left in his game to take it to yet another level. Coaching is in every sense Mouratoglou's business.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Cairns\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#).

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Wheel out the big guns

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 12/01/2024, Simeon Thomaswilson, Page 1

There's no shortage of racewinning experience in the peloton when the women's Tour Down Under begins. Action kicks off on Friday when the peloton rolls out from Hahndorf for a 93.9km bike ride to Campbelltown. In the second year of the race boasting WorldTour status, the female peloton will be the largest ever. Among the field are three riders who know all about TDU glory.

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Harness power of sport to tackle violence against women

West Australian, General News, 12/01/2024, Stuart Murray, Page 52

The effectiveness of the power of sports to save women's lives was vividly demonstrated at the Sydney Cricket Ground last week. For the 16th consecutive year, a sea of pink enveloped fans, players, police and numerous others in support of the annual Jane McGrath Day.

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Ballarat to host Ivor Burge and National Championships

Ballarat Courier, General News, 12/01/2024, Greg Gliddon, Page 46

The NBA Global Academy and Australia's best up-andcoming basketballers will be in Ballarat at the end of January after the city was chosen as the host both the National Under-20 Championship and Ivor Burge National championships which will be run from January 30 to February 4.

Yea paramedic to compete in Ironman World Championship

Shepparton News Online, Other, 11/01/2024

In the fast lane: Jacqui Graham at the Yea ambulance branch. Working as a paramedic is one of the most important jobs in our community, requiring workers to be on their A-game all the time. Having a passion outside their job is one way these workers can reset after work pressures and continue to be at their best.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

When will the public recognise the value of universities?

Canberra Times, General News, 12/01/2024, Kylie Message-Jones, Page 66

Universities are taking a beating in the culture wars. Last year the Chair of Universities Australia, David Lloyd, called them "a ready punch bag or an easy target, used to score points in some inexplicable game of tall poppy decapitation". Recent examples have included university presidents in the United States from Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania.

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It's the Lixa of life versus the threat of the superbugs

West Australian, Business News, 12/01/2024, Cheyanne Enciso, Page 48

Lixa boss Maud Eijkenboom says she is on a mission to resolve a global rise in antibiotic resistance, which is already narrowing the range of medicines available to treat common illnesses. The WA biotech startup is developing a drug aimed at treating antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which occurs when bacteria and fungi no longer respond to medicine.

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

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AI promises boost in COVID-19 detection via chest X-ray imaging

The Mandarin, Other, 11/01/2024, Melissa Coade

Researchers have developed a system using automated tools that can rapidly scan for COVID-19 with 98% accuracy, meaning the delays and errors of PCR testing can be curtailed. Working out whether a patient has COVID-19, flu or other types of pneumonia can be difficult as symptoms such as fever, cough, breathing problems and a sore throat are common in all cases.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

We are acting to close the gap, insists Albanese

The Australian, General News, 12/01/2024, Rosie Lewis, Page 1

Anthony Albanese has declared his government is "taking action to close the gap on Indigenous issues", challenging concerns from Aboriginal leaders that Labor has not moved quickly enough since the failed voice referendum to outline its next steps. The Prime Minister is under pressure to detail his "plan B" for reconciliation, with some form of road map expected to be unveiled once parliament returns next month.

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

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'The Kimberley in crisis'

West Australian, General News, 12/01/2024, Sarah Crawford, Page 4

When police officers from the Liquor Enforcement Unit travelled to Kununurra in 2019 to interview Aboriginal elder Ian Trust about social harm caused by alcohol he told them, "the Kimberley is in crisis". In his police statement, obtained by The West Australian, the chief executive officer at Wunan Foundation told how youths aged 14 or 15 were exchanging sex for money to buy alcohol or drugs.

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

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Time to rally for Norm

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 12/01/2024, Chelsea Bunting, Page 2

An Indigenous artist known for proudly sharing his culture with the Geelong community is facing the fight of his life. Norm Stanley, 46, was diagnosed with stage 4 metastatic kidney cancer two days before Christmas. The cancer has spread to the his bones, leaving him wheelchair-bound.

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A good health yarn

Medical Forum, Other, 11/01/2024

A new healthcare education program developed in rural WA has been breaking down communication barriers between clinicians and Aboriginal patients. Clinical Yarning' is a patient-centred communication framework to increase healthcare professionals' knowledge, confidence and competence in delivering care to Aboriginal patients.

[Read More](#)

'Disease of disadvantage': scientists look to tackle parasitic disease in Aboriginal communities

National Indigenous Times, Other, 11/01/2024, Dechlan Brennan

A poorly understood parasitic worm disease significantly impacting Indigenous communities is finally getting the attention it demands, researchers say. Strongyloidiasis is a poorly understood parasitic worm disease most common in remote Australian communities, as well as in some returned travellers, refugees or asylum seekers.

[Read More](#)

Hot, crowded jails spark danger fears, calls for action

National Indigenous Times, Other, 11/01/2024, Rudi Maxwell

Two incidents at Alice Springs prison have highlighted conditions Aboriginal advocates and a union that represents corrections workers describe as dangerous. The NT has some of the highest prison rates in the country, locking up 1127.8 people per 100,000 in the September 2023 quarter, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, more than five times the national average.

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OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Mosquito worry in floods

Herald Sun, General News, 12/01/2024, Carly Douglas, Page 11

Authorities have raised the alarm about the risk of mosquito-borne diseases in flood ravaged communities across regional Victoria. Residents in areas impacted by recent flooding are being urged to take precautions against mosquito-borne illnesses, such as Ross River virus, Murray Valley encephalitis and Japanese encephalitis, as pooling water and warmer temperatures create the ideal breeding environment.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Shepparton News \(Shepparton\)](#).

Freers Beach in Tasmania shut down over E. coli detection

The Mercury, Other, 11/01/2024, Jessica Wang

A popular beach in Tasmania has been shut down after elevated levels of E. coli were found during regular testing. The harmful bacteria was detected in parts of Freers Beach in Port Sorell, a town on the northwest coast of Tasmania. Found in the faeces of humans and animals, E. coli can cause diarrhoea, vomiting and stomach upsets if consumed through contaminated food or water.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Online barrage of weight loss ads is shocking

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 12/01/2024, Natassia Chrysanthos, Page 20

I have a handful of New Year's resolutions. Weight loss is not one of them, yet I've spent the better part of my time this year scrolling through a barrage of social media ads for "breakthrough weight loss medications". [...] One company is now avoiding the Therapeutic Goods Administration altogether, by selling unapproved copycat medicine in the face of worldwide Ozempic shortages.

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

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Harrison attempted suicide when he was five. Why this asthma drug was linked

The Age, Other, 10/01/2024, Angus Thomson and Aisha Dow

A common asthma drug used by children has been linked to three suicides in Australia and hundreds of other medical episodes since a federal government safety review six years ago, prompting a renewed push from families to add better warnings to packaging. The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia are considering updating product information and labelling rules warning consumers about the link between drugs containing montelukast and neuropsychiatric side effects, after campaigning by families with children affected by the drug.

Also reported by: [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [Channel 10 \(Melbourne\)](#), [Channel 7 \(Melbourne\)](#), [ABC Radio Sydney \(Sydney\)](#), [SBS \(Sydney\)](#)

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What to know about Zepbound, the newest weight loss drug

Adelaide Now, Other, 11/01/2024, Adella Beaini

A newly approved weight loss drug is promising to be the most effective medication yet — even more than Ozempic and Wegovy. [...] Currently, Zepbound is still awaiting registration with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

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Doctors fear 'looming crisis' in palliative care as opioid options dry up

Australian Doctor, Other, 11/01/2024, Paul Smith

Doctors have warned the Federal Government that it needs to act to stop a looming crisis in palliative care and pain management due to clinicians' decreasing access to vital opioid analgesics. [...] Dr Mott said the Federal Government needed to consider legislation to double the current mandated six-month time frame for drug companies to notify the TGA of medication withdrawals.

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Potentially hazardous sports supplements seized

Sports supplements containing a range of prescription and prohibited substances have been seized by authorities following a raid on a Sydney retail store. The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) announced that the seizures were made when the regulator and the NSW Police

[Read More](#)

Little Green Pharma's subsidiary Reset Mind Sciences launches clinical trial using psilocybin

West Australian, Other, 11/01/2024, Cheyanne Enciso

Little Green Pharma's psychedelics arm has kicked off a clinical trial using psilocybin for patients with treatment-resistant depression. LGP on Thursday announced the study by Reset Mind Sciences, which will investigate the efficacy and safety of psilocybin-assisted therapy for patients with major depressive disorder. [...] It follows a move by the Therapeutic Goods Administration to allow medicines with psilocybin (magic mushrooms) and MDMA to be prescribed by authorised prescribers from July last year.

[Read More](#)

GyroGlove is a hand-stabilizing glove for people with tremors

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 11/01/2024, Cherlynn Low

The assistive device debuted at CES 2024. A busy, stimulating convention like CES can exacerbate hand tremors for those living with Parkinsons. [...] Ong said the GyroGlove is registered with the FDA and the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) as a medical device, and that the company is in talks with insurance providers in the US to consider covering the glove for those who need it.

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OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

Pressured to get 'cooked on drugs'

Herald Sun, General News, 12/01/2024, Brooke Grebert-Craig, Page 18

A hardcore Melbourne reveller has lifted the lid on the toxic culture of raves, revealing that partygoers feel peer pressured to get "cooked" on drugs, as four people continue to fight for life after overdosing at a Flemington rave last weekend. The 27-year-old man, who asked not to be named, told the Herald Sun that most revellers take MDMA at hardstyle and trance events.

Also reported by: [Channel 9 \(Sydney\)](#).

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FOOD STANDARDS

Masters says rivals milking consumers on foreign owners

West Australian, Business News, 12/01/2024, Adrian Lowe, Page 48

Milk brand Masters has stepped up its fight against its competition, taking to the streets of Perth to accuse rivals of misleading consumers. Masters, owned by ASX-listed dairy giant Bega, is accusing local rivals Brownes Dairy and Harvey Fresh of misleading consumers that they are not Australian-owned.

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

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More asbestos found at Rozelle Parklands

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 12/01/2024, Anthony Segaert and Nigel Gladstone, Page 1

Asbestos has been found in three more samples of garden mulch at Rozelle Parklands, forcing authorities to come up with a plan to remove a huge portion of mulch in the 10-hectare park. The state's transport agency confirmed yesterday three of 34 samples taken from across the parkland site returned positive results for traces of bonded asbestos.

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