



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Monday, 15th 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.

[Minister Butler](#) | [Minister Wells](#) | [Assistant Minister McBride](#)
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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [Canberra Times](#) (page 1) reports ACT population Minister Emma Davidson has backed researchers' calls for a national network of pill testing sites to better monitor and treat the harm caused by drugs after three new types were discovered in Canberra.
- The [Canberra Times](#) (page 2) reports the government will invest \$188.5 million over four years in what Health Minister Mark Butler has labelled an "end to end [ABF] crackdown" on the illegal tobacco trade. *Also reported by:* [The Age](#), [The Australian](#), [ABC News](#)
- The [Sydney Morning Herald](#) (page 3) reports an 87-year-old woman sexually assaulted at an aged care home in Sydney's Hills district has been taken to the Royal North Shore Hospital and the matter referred to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.
- [The Age](#) (page 3) reports a government decision to expand access to self-administered pap smears has seen the number of people choosing to have the test increase by 2500 per cent. *Also reported by:* [Sydney Morning Herald](#)

- The [Sydney Morning Herald](#) (page 10) reports the Department of Health says it is working to provide timely answers to over 900 questions taken on notice at Senate Estimates, with more than 600 coming from Liberal senator Jane Hume. *Also reported by:* [The Age](#)
- [The Australian](#) (online) reports the Department of Health, the ACQSC, the ADHA, the AIHW, Hearing Australia, the NDIA, the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, the AICIS, and the Organ and Tissue Authority are amongst 62 government entities impacted by a cyber attack last year on law firm HWL Ebsworth. *Also reported by:* [The Australian](#)

MINISTER BUTLER

Tense Taiwan status quo

Australian Financial Review, General News, 15/01/2024, Michael Smith, Page 1

Taiwan is entering an era of political instability that is expected to add to US-China tensions after the island nation elected a new president regarded as a troublemaker by Beijing, but failed to deliver him a parliamentary majority.

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Coalition pursues 900 unanswered questions

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 15/01/2024, Olivia Ireland, Page 10

More than 900 questions asked of the health and aged care portfolio have been left unanswered since October estimates, as crossbench and opposition members accuse the government of having "contempt for transparency". As of Friday, data collated from the Community Affairs committee found only 62 questions on notice were answered for the health and aged care portfolio after the supplementary budget estimates on October 26 and 931 had been left unanswered. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler declined to comment.

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

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Arson attack as tobacco war rages

Age, General News, 15/01/2024, Lachlan Abbott, Page 13

Explosions and fireworks erupted in a northern Melbourne street yesterday after a tobacco shop firebombing caused an intense blaze that spread to a nearby home and gutted the targeted shop. The attack occurred the same day the federal government announced \$188.5 million in new funding for the Australian Border Force to crack down on illicit tobacco importation, a lucrative criminal trade that sparked an underworld turf war. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said in Adelaide yesterday that the illicit tobacco trade was "a rip-off of taxpayers".

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

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An 'ATM for crims': Govt targets illegal cigarettes

Canberra Times, General News, 15/01/2024, Adrian Rollins, Page 2

The Australian Border Force will work with law enforcement agencies in other countries and the states and territories in a multi-year effort to crackdown on the \$3 billion illegal tobacco trade. [...] "Illegal cigarettes ... are an ATM for the illegal activities of organised crime," Health Minister Mark Butler said.

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

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Get 'fun parts' tested

Northern Territory News, General News, 15/01/2024, Page 10

Tinder and Grindr will be used as part of a fresh push to encourage Aussies to get their "fun parts" tested amid a concerning rise in sexually transmitted diseases. Health Minister Mark Butler launched

the Beforeplay campaign on Sunday in a bid to encourage young Aussies to take their sexual health seriously.

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

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Dating apps to spread safe sex message

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 15/01/2024, Page 8

Dating apps will feature a new sexual health campaign urging young Australians to get their "fun parts" tested amid a rise in sexually transmitted infections. Health Minister Mark Butler launched the Beforeplay campaign on Sunday, which encourages people to do their part in stopping the spread of infections by getting tested regularly and practising safe sex.

Also reported by: [Daily Advertiser \(Wagga Wagga\)](#), [Launceston Examiner \(Launceston\)](#), [Bendigo Advertiser \(Bendigo\)](#), [Burnie Advocate \(Burnie\)](#).

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

Grieving mum demands action on immunisation

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 15/01/2024, Natalie Croxon, Page 2

A grieving Horsley mother is frustrated that politicians and governments are failing to respond to her calls to make the meningococcal B vaccine part of the state's immunisation program. Stacey Chater lost her son Brayden in November 2022 to meningococcal disease. [...] An online petition has garnered over 11,000 signatures and Mrs Chater has met with dozens of MPs - including NSW Health Minister Ryan Park and federal Health Minister Mark Butler - but lawmakers seemingly haven't progressed the matter.

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Are Medicare Urgent Care Clinics making a difference?

Launceston Examiner, General News, 15/01/2024, Stephanie Dalton, Page 2

It's been six months since the first Medicare Urgent Care Clinic (UCC) opened in Tasmania. The federal government introduced the clinics to ease the pressure on Tasmanian hospitals, but have the new clinics made a difference? [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said one in three visits to a clinic occurs on a weekend.

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

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STI spike prompts bid to get appy

Newcastle Herald, General News, 15/01/2024, Tess Ikononou, Page 4

Dating apps will feature a new sexual health campaign urging young Australians to get their "fun parts" tested amid a rise in sexually transmitted infections. Health Minister Mark Butler launched the Beforeplay campaign on Sunday, which encourages people to do their part in stopping the spread of infections by getting tested regularly and practising safe sex.

Also reported by: [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [HealthTimes \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [Perth Now \(Online\)](#).

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Covid-19 here for 40 years

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 15/01/2024, Ellen Ransley, Page 4

Australia is unlikely to return to widespread mask mandates, experts say, despite the country grappling with a surge of Covid-19 cases. [...] "And that's what you'd expect when you've got a highly immunised population." Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said there was evidence to show JN. 1 was linked to increased hospitalisations, and "no evidence yet to show that it is any more transmissible or severe than the myriad other Omicron sub-variants that we've all been grappling with over the last couple of years".

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Vapes of wrath: the gangs that prey on kids

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 15/01/2024, Ben Butler, Page 14

The same Middle East organised crime groups that dominate the lucrative illegal tobacco industry are fuelling a vaping boom that preys on children, the Australian Border Force says. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler has allocated the ABF \$25m over two years to fund the crackdown.

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MPs unite for funding fight to tame monster

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 15/01/2024, Cydonee Mardon, Page 20

Labor MP and pediatrician Mike Freeland says Australian researchers are "on the cusp" of major advances in battling the "monster" brain cancer that kills 20 to 25 Aussie kids each year, and is confident the federal health minister will find the funds to help them give parents hope. Politicians on both sides of government have met with parents who have lost their sons and daughters to the cancer known as DIPG, as well as researchers who say \$21m can help them double survival in the next five years. While refusing to comment specifically on the submission or \$21m plea put forward by researchers, including Professor Matt Dun and Professor David Ziegler, Dr Freeland said he was sure Federal Health Minister Mark Butler would "do everything he can" to find funding while balancing the needs of all cancer research.

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Illicit tobacco trade faces Australian Border Force crackdown

The Australian, Other, 14/01/2024, Jack Quail

A major crackdown to stem the illicit tobacco trade will be launched by the Albanese government to target the smuggling and sale of illegally imported cigarettes, On Sunday, Treasurer Jim Chalmers announced a \$188. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said limiting the availability of illicit tobacco products was key to reducing the number of smokers.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Perth Now \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Darwin\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Cairns\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#).

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Crackdown slated for \$3 billion illegal tobacco trade

Canberra Times, Other, 14/01/2024, Tess Ikonomou

Australia will crackdown on the illegal tobacco trade under a \$188.5m boost, which will bring together the nation's law enforcement agencies to target its sale and importation. Treasurer Jim Chalmers announced on Sunday the Australian Border Force (ABF) will be given extra funding over the next four years in a bid to stem smuggling of illicit tobacco. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler says reducing the availability of illicit tobacco is also critical to reducing the number of people who smoke.

Also reported by: [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [The Queenslander \(Online\)](#), [Michael West Media \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Perth\)](#), [Daily Liberal \(Dubbo\)](#), [Central Western Daily \(Orange\)](#), [Western Advocate \(Bathurst\)](#), [Daily Advertiser \(Wagga Wagga\)](#), [Bendigo Advertiser \(Bendigo\)](#), [Northern Daily Leader \(Tamworth\)](#), [Border Mail \(Albury-Wodonga\)](#), [Warrnambool Standard \(Warrnambool\)](#), [Launceston Examiner \(Launceston\)](#), [Ballarat Courier \(Ballarat\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Wollongong\)](#), [Burnie Advocate \(Burnie\)](#).

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Why young people support the ban of vapes

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 14/01/2024, Julie Cross

Young people say it is easy to get hooked on vapes, with nearly half of those who have tried it saying they are or have been addicted. An exclusive survey of 15 to 24-year-old Aussies found a quarter have vaped and more than one in six vapers spent \$100 a month on their habit. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the vaping reforms will protect Australians, particularly young people, from the harms of vaping and nicotine dependence.

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Major change coming to dating apps like Tinder and Grindr which may give those looking for love second thoughts

Popular dating apps like Tinder and Grindr will soon feature ads warning young Australians about sexually transmitted infections, as part of a new government initiative. Health Minister Mark Butler launched the Beforeplay campaign as a 'timely reminder' to those aged 20 to 34, amid a rise in sexually transmitted diseases.

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Tobacco wars: 'Multiple explosions' heard at another suspected arson attack in Melbourne

The Guardian, Other, 14/01/2024

The federal government has announced a border force crackdown on illegal tobacco imports, after yet another suspicious shop fire, which started early Sunday morning amid Victoria's so-called tobacco wars. [...] Health minister Mark Butler said reducing the availability of illicit tobacco was "critical to tobacco control".

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Australian government to push safe sex messages on dating apps after concerning rise in STIs

Sky News Australia, Other, 14/01/2024, Courtney Gould

Tinder and Grindr will be used as part of a fresh push to encourage Aussies to get their "fun parts" tested amid a concerning rise in sexually transmitted diseases. Health Minister Mark Butler will launch Beforeplay campaign will be launched on Sunday in a bid to encourage young Aussies to take their sexual health seriously.

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Australian government sexual health campaign targets dating apps Tinder and Grindr

24sports News, Other, 14/01/2024, James Brien

Dating apps will feature a new sexual health campaign urging young Australians to get their "fun parts" tested amid rising rates of sexually transmitted infections. Health Minister Mark Butler launched the Beforeplay campaign on Sunday, encouraging people to do their part to stop the spread of infections by getting tested regularly and practicing safe sex.

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Medication shortage hits cancer and chronic pain patients

Your Life Choices, Other, 15/01/2024

More than a dozen opioid products have been discontinued in the past year and doctors say this massive narrowing of the market is restricting what they can give their vulnerable patients. Kathy Claxton lost her pancreas to neuroendocrine cancer four years ago and lives with the pain of neuroendocrine tumours in her liver. [...] Palliative Care Australia is one of four health bodies to have written to health minister Mark Butler to raise concerns about what they say are vital pain relief medicines.

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ABC, ABC News (Sunday), 14/01/2024, Jeremy Fernandez

Almost \$200m will be spent on new efforts to stop illegal tobacco and vapes from entering Australia as part of a broader push on cracking down the illicit industry, particularly where it targets young people. Health Minister Mark Butler says organised crime gangs are using illegal cigarettes, tobacco, and vapes as an "ATM" to fund their activities like sex trafficking and drug trafficking.

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ABC Radio Sydney, 23:00 News (Weekend), 14/01/2024

The federal government has announced a \$188 million crackdown on illegal cigarettes, as another tobacco shop has been severely damaged in a suspected arson attack in Melbourne. Police have attributed dozens of active arson investigations to a turf war between criminal gangs over the sale of

tobacco on the black market. Health Minister Mark Butler says the crackdown will assist Border Force to shut down the trade.

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ABC Radio Perth, 18:00 News (Weekend), 14/01/2024

Police have attributed dozens of active arson investigations to a turf war between criminal gangs over the sale of tobacco on the black market. Health Minister Mark Butler says the crackdown will assist Border Force to shut down the trade.

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3AW, 14:00 News (Weekend), 14/01/2024

The Federal Government says a crackdown on illicit tobacco will remove a key revenue source for organised crime. Labor is giving Border Force an extra \$190 million to lead a multi pronged response. Health Minister Mark Butler says the new approach will also restore billions to the budget.

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4BC, 13:00 News (Weekend), 14/01/2024

Border Force will receive a major funding boost as part of a plan to crack down on illicit tobacco imports. It comes as the Albanese government is announcing a multi-pronged plan to stop black market tobacco at the border, and shut down overseas producers at the source. Health Minister Mark Butler says illegal cigarettes are a key source of income for criminal groups.

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ABC News, The Ticket, 14/01/2024, Tracey Holmes

The Federal Government has announced a \$188 million crackdown on illegal cigarettes, as another tobacco shop burns in Melbourne. Police have attributed dozens of active arson investigations to a turf war between criminal gangs over the sale of tobacco on the black market. Health Minister Mark Butler says the crackdown will assist Border Force to shut down the trade.

Similar content in: [ABC Radio Sydney \(Sydney\)](#).

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MINISTER WELLS

Government to invest in strategies to further combat bullying, discrimination and abuse in sport

RiotACT, Other, 14/01/2024, Andrew McLaughlin

The Federal Government has announced it will allocate \$36.3 million over four years to 2027-28 to better tackle abuse, bullying, sexual misconduct and discrimination in sport. The funding package for Sport Integrity Australia (SIA) will allow the body to implement strategies and initiatives, including: [...] Federal Minister for Sport Anika Wells cited the recent success of the Matildas women's football team, the men's and women's cricket teams, the Diamonds netball team, and Australia's Olympians and Paralympians as examples of how diversity in sport can be beneficial.

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DEPARTMENT

Prime Minister's department, Reserve Bank victims of HWL Ebsworth Russia-linked cyber attack as government finally reveals list of agencies

The Australian, Other, 14/01/2024, Ellen Whinnett

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's department, the Reserve Bank and Australia Post are among the government agencies that had sensitive data stolen by Russia-linked hackers who compromised the servers of law firm HWL Ebsworth. Eight months after the BlackCat/ALPHV ransomware gang stole 2. [...] Department of Health and Aged Care 33.

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

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CORONAVIRUS

COVID wave higher than the winter peak

Daily Advertiser, General News, 15/01/2024, Abhramil Hazra, Page 3

More people with COVID-19 have been turning up at Wagga Base Hospital's emergency department as a fresh variant of the virus drives a new surge of cases across NSW. The state's health authority has warned COVID-19 remains at high levels in the community and the rise in case numbers was putting more people, especially the more vulnerable, at risk.

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'Stay home' if you're sick

Northern Daily Leader, General News, 15/01/2024, Rachel Gray, Page 1

People with a cough, sore throat, fever, or other respiratory tract infections are being urged to stay home during the Tamworth Country Music Festival as the region grapples with a surge in COVID cases. Hunter New England Health District (HNELHD) acting director Dr Peter Murray said experts had seen higher transmission levels of the COVID subvariant JN.1 in the New England and Hunter region since Christmas. This was a major concern due to the high number of people who would be travelling for the festival, as JN.1 escalates across NSW and Victoria.

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Spike in Covid heart issues

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 15/01/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 2

Queenslanders are flooding GPs practices with heart problems sparked by long Covid, the state's peak medical body has revealed. Doctors are seeing more patients with myocarditis and pericarditis due to inflammation caused by the virus that can cause palpitations, chest pain or shortness of breath.

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What does the future look like for COVID-19?

Canberra Times, Other, 14/01/2024, Steve Robson

In 2024, the world at the threshold of its fifth year dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, and the holiday season has coincided with the eighth major wave of infections. Most infections now are due to the globally dominant JN.1 type of virus. Its new variant - BA.2.86 - known as "Pirola" seems to infect the deep lung tissues with great efficiency just as the early, pre-Omicron, strains did. As we experienced with the Omicron variant, these new strains have appeared in our communities unexpectedly and rapidly, and have spread quickly causing the current wave of infections.

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2GB, Healthy Living, 14/01/2024, Ross Walker and Ned Green

Interview with Dr Robert Boyle, disease expert. Compere mentions a new sub-variant of the COVID-19 Omicron virus called JN.1, which the World Health Organization has classified as a variant of interest because of its increasing spread. Boyle says the JN.1 variant is currently transmitted all over the world and is currently peaking at Europe, the US, and Australia. He admits that the variant is currently successful in evading set immunity, which is why its transmitting more.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Man, 80, on bail after alleged sexual assault on woman, 87

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 15/01/2024, Megan Gorrey, Page 3

An 80-year-old man has been released from custody after he was charged with sexually assaulting an elderly woman with a cognitive impairment at an aged care facility in north-west Sydney. William John Newbold, of Asquith, was arrested after police on Friday responded to a report an 87-year-old female resident had been assaulted at the aged care home at Galston, in the Hills District.

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

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Challenges ahead as aged care faces another year of change

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 15/01/2024, Darren Birbeck, Page 48

The start of a new year is an opportunity to set some goals or resolutions for the year ahead. For the aged care sector, 2024 represents another year of ongoing change. [...] As part of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, a review of international models of aged care found that small-scale domestic models of residential aged care were reported as better meeting resident preferences.

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Pensioners feel the pinch

Hobart Mercury, General News, 15/01/2024, Rob Inglis, Page 7

Bellerive pensioners Peter and Robyn Miller say increased cost of living pressures have "really hit us" as new research shows residents living on Hobart's Eastern Shore are feeling the pinch of rising grocery prices and ballooning power bills. A study commissioned by Pembroke Labor MLC Luke Edmunds found that the price of groceries was putting pressure on the household budgets of 71 per cent of people in his electorate, while power bills and other utilities were a budgetary strain for 64 per cent of his constituents.

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Older people have plenty to contribute

Hobart Mercury, General News, 15/01/2024, Ingrid Harrison, Page 19

In the realm of politics, diversity is crucial for a thriving democracy. The call for younger individuals to step into the political arena is not just admirable but a necessity to infuse fresh perspectives and

innovative ideas. However, when this call is accompanied by ageist rhetoric, as seen in the recent comments by Hobart City Councillor Ryan Posselt, it undermines the very essence of a united and inclusive society.

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POPULATION HEALTH

This doctor has secret to a better healthspan

Australian Financial Review, General News, 15/01/2024, Laurel Ives, Page 29

A former surgeon says a longer, happier life is open to anybody willing to raise a sweat.

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Don't worry, I wont bite ...

Herald Sun, General News, 15/01/2024, Sarah Booth, Page 13

More than 12 Victorians daily are treated in emergency departments for animal bites or injuries. New figures show that creatures big and small from ants to kangaroos regularly taken on humans. Staff treated 18,250 patients in the state's public hospital emergency departments for animal-related injuries excluding dogs and horses in the past four financial years, new Monash University Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit data show.

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Youth schooled over vapes

Shepparton News, General News, 15/01/2024, Jay Bryce, Page 7

Following new legislation cracking down on the importation of vapes, a program has been created to target young people's education and awareness about the effects of vaping in Victorian schools. The program, titled Seeing Through The Haze, was collaboratively developed by Quit Victoria, Monash University, VicHealth, the Victorian Department of Education, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation Victoria.

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'It will probably kill me'

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 15/01/2024, Julie Cross, Page 15

Jacob Le started vaping at 15 and is now hooked. The 19-year-old medical student from Western Sydney is on a waiting list, several months long, to see a doctor who can prescribe nicotine and help wean him off e-cigarettes. He said a friend managed to quit that way. He said the medical profession was not equipped to deal with people like him who wanted to get off vapes, but need help to do so.

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LIST: Tassie towns without fluoride in their water, Bothwell councillor wants fluoridated drinking water

The Mercury, Other, 14/01/2024, Judy Augustine

Scientists have long promoted the benefits of added fluoride in tap water, but the tooth decay fighting mineral isn't something all Tasmanians are able to access. Located in the Central Highlands, the rural town of Bothwell is one such location which currently does not have fluoridated water. It's the national target for towns with populations over 1000 people to have fluoridated water, something which Tasmania currently complies with.

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As another tobacco shop burns in Melbourne, government hands Border Force \$188 million for tobacco crackdown

ABC Online, Other, 14/01/2024, Jake Evans

As another tobacco shop burns in Melbourne, the federal government has launched a \$188 million

crackdown to combat an escalating "turf war" over illegal tobacco, following its January 1 ban of disposable vapes. Victoria Police yesterday said the current situation appeared to be the result of "criminal syndicates in conflict due to competition for profit derived from the illicit tobacco market".

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Australian students were handed 'wellbeing shots' made by a subsidiary of British American Tobacco. Experts fear a new front in the health wars

The Guardian, Other, 15/01/2024, Melissa Davey and Natasha May

As students at the University of Sydney prepared for their end-of-year exams in late 2023, a trio in brightly coloured jumpsuits pulled up to the campus in a van, armed with tiny bottles labelled "Ryde wellbeing shots". They approached students as they studied on the campus lawns, asking them to share their strategies to cope with exam stress and filming their responses for TikTok.

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Improving health care for trans people in Australia should be a priority

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 15/01/2024, Penelope Strauss

In this issue of the MJA, Zwickl and colleagues describe the health care experiences of trans Australians during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. 1 Unfortunately, their findings are unsurprising. The health needs of trans people were inadequately met even prior to the pandemic, and they face major barriers to both general and gender-affirming health care.

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Climate change testing the limitations of human behaviour: Dr Will Cairns

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 15/01/2024

Dr Will Cairns reflects on a chance childhood meeting with the physicist Leo Szilard, inventor of the atom bomb, and wonders about our capacity to address the challenges facing humankind. In 1960/61 my family travelled around the world via Hong Kong and England to my father's sabbatical on Long Island, outside New York City.

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Deadly health impact of wood heater smoke

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 15/01/2024

Wood heater smoke in the Australian Capital Territory is estimated to cause similar mortality to the extreme smoke of the Black Summer Bushfires of 2019/20, new research has found. The alarm has been sounded about the dangers of wood heater smoke, with new research showing just how deadly exposure to the smoke is in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

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2GB, Healthy Living, 14/01/2024, Ross Walker and Ned Green

Interview with Dr Nicole Higgins, President, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. Compere mentions that the epidemic of vaping is not getting any better with Australian teens. Higgins points out that a third of Australians under 18yos are vaping quite consistently and she mentions that the problem is that 90% of those vapes are nicotine. She admits that this is creating a new generation of nicotine addicts, which will undermine the hard work the health industry has done to get people to quit smoking.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Pap smear era ends, now for DIY test

Thousands of Australian women who had previously feared uncomfortable Pap smears and speculum examinations have now had cervical screening tests for the first time because of a new option to take their own swab in private. The federal government expanded eligibility for a new selfcollected cervical screening test in July 2022, resulting in a 25-fold increase in people doing their own tests.

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

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Cancer check-ups urged despite cost-of-living pressure

Canberra Times, General News, 15/01/2024, Page 7

Imagination is required to come up with novel methods of encouraging better healthcare among men, with only so many ways experts can say the same thing. But new research revealing that cost of living pressures have become a hurdle to Australians seeking regular medical checkups is making that task a no-brainer. Especially when it comes to a killer like prostate cancer that demands treatment based almost exclusively on early detection.

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Friend's push for testing

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 15/01/2024, Madeleine Achenza, Page 4

A young Australian woman has opened up about how her friend's skin cancer scare led to a chilling discovery. Influencer Katrina Chan, 30, had put off getting her skin checked for years due to the cost. But she was pushed to get assessed after her friend Stephanie Adams, 29, discovered a questionablelooking mole on her foot was precancerous. Ms Chan then forked out about \$200 for the first fullbody check and was stunned when they found a melanoma spot.

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

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Call-out to join 'Sea of Pink'

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 15/01/2024, Bethany Westwood, Page 4

Breast cancer survivors and their supporters across Queensland are being urged to fight the disease by joining this year's "Sea of Pink". Mater's International Women's Day Fun Run raised more than \$2m last year with more than 20,000 people running in Brisbane and a further 3300 taking part across Queensland, including Townsville.

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Call to arms

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 15/01/2024, Page 14

Like it or lump it, Les Walker's call to get your skin checked is an important one. Whatever fringe of the political divide you may have found yourself on at this point in your life, there's no denying common sense. [...] According to the Cancer Council of Australia, half of the people living in our region will be diagnosed with some form of cancer by age 80.

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I thought I pulled a muscle but I actually had stage 4 lung cancer aged 37 despite never smoking - here are the signs you musn't ignore

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 15/01/2024, Emily Joshu

A Texas woman was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer at just 37 years old, despite never smoking. Tiffany Job, a nurse and mother of eight-year-old twin boys, assumed that the pain in her right rib that began in March 2020 was a pulled muscle resulting from a workout. However, scans would later reveal tumors in her lungs that had spread to her neck, and bones.

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Benefits of endometriosis surgery 'remain unknown'

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 15/01/2024

Despite endometriosis being common among women in Australia, it remains unknown which patients

will benefit from surgery, prompting the need for more local research, write Dr Samantha Mooney and Associate Professor Sarah Holdsworth-Carson. Endometriosis is a condition where tissue similar to the lining of the uterus (known as endometrium) deposits, grows or develops in other parts of the body (here).

[Read More](#)

Mum makes horror find in family home after years of ill health

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 14/01/2024

A mum-of-three has shared the scary signs of hidden mould that she claims left her with a life-altering disease, her husband with seizures, and her daughter with migraines. She is warning others just how hidden the domestic scourge can be. Danielle Wollmann long suspected something was wrong in her home, with her family members suffering various health symptoms with no explanation. The mum herself went through months of bloating, brain fog and weight gain.

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PRIMARY CARE

Labor's healthy dose of hubris

Courier Mail, General News, 15/01/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 8

The Queensland government has declared 2023 as the "year of delivery" in health care, but sidestepped repeated criticism the state's health system remains in "crisis". Acting Health Minister Mark Ryan said from "strengthening Queensland's world-class healthcare workforce" to opening five new satellite hospitals, the state had "achieved a lot in 2023". [...] A backlog in scanning also resulted in the Australian Medical Association revealing doctors had so little faith in the state's public health system, they were referring patients to private radiologists for scans to avoid life-threatening delays.

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Closures allow for key work

Courier Mail, General News, 15/01/2024, Stephen Nadin, Page 17

People will soon have easier access to Princess Alexandra Hospital, with upgrades to Dutton Park station underway as part of the Cross River Rail project. Extended track closures come to an end on Thursday which has allowed for about 500 workers to make significant progress in safely completing critical works and complex engineering.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

What is ADHD 'parent training'?

Canberra Times, General News, 15/01/2024, Cher McGillivray, Page 16

Problems with focus and impulse control can be common developmental stages through which children and adolescents naturally progress. But they can also be symptoms of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), a chronic condition. ADHD is a pattern of inattention or hyperactivity and impulsivity (or both) that interferes with functioning or development, and persists into adulthood. ADHD affects around 7.6 per cent of children aged three to 12 years and 5.6 per cent of teens.

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A 'trigger' can provoke a powerful emotional reaction. But using trauma language too casually can diminish its gravity

The Guardian, Other, 15/01/2024, Ashwini Padhi

Incorporating clinical terms into our everyday conversations has become a common practice. However,

when mental health and trauma language is used too casually or inaccurately, it can diminish its gravity. This inadvertently reinforces mental health stigma rather than helping to dismantle it. In the realm of mental health and emotional wellbeing, the term "triggered" has become common. Often used casually in everyday conversation, its weight and complexity is sometimes overlooked.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

His name is Henry

Cairns Post, General News, 15/01/2024, Catherine Duffy, Page 4

A young mother honouring her forever baby boy, has run a treadmill marathon at the Millaa Millaa Hotel to raise funds for Stillbirth Foundation Australia and help break the stigma surrounding stillbirth. Millaa Millaa mother of three Marina White never got to bring her youngest child home. Her son, Henry White, was delivered stillborn at the Cairns Private Hospital maternity ward, before it permanently closed its doors on November 1, 2023.

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

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Passion fatigue takes toll as leaders fail in duty of self-care

West Australian, General News, 15/01/2024, Darja Kragt, Page 29

Leaders are reporting alarming high levels of burnout in almost every industry, with notable results in health care and education. In 2023, 72 per cent of leaders reported feeling used up at the end of the day, an increase from 60 per cent in 2020, according to the DDI Global Leadership Forecast.

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New cohort of paramedics to begin work in regional and rural NSW

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 14/01/2024, Madeline Crittenden

More than 100 new paramedics will start work in regional and rural communities across the state this year to improve healthcare in the bush. The Minns government is delivering on its election commitment for additional regional paramedics, with the first cohort beginning their six-week induction programs this month.

[Read More](#)

Boy calls ambulance weeks after receiving life-saving lessons from paramedics at primary school

ABC Online, Other, 14/01/2024, Emile Pavlich

When Nick Wilson felt pins and needles in his face, he knew something was wrong. As he left a games arcade on a family holiday in Geelong, west of Melbourne, with his son Harry, the 44-year-old was on the verge of having a medical emergency.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

No relevant coverage

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

The NDIS at ten years: designing an equitable scheme for the next decade

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 15/01/2024, Jennifer Smith

Hill and colleagues discuss the very significant issue of access to support under the NDIS for psychosocial disability and draw attention to suicide statistics for this group as a further indicator of inequity. They comment that people with psychosocial disability receive fewer supports in areas that might bring about greater recovery, and address the broader health equity impacts of a failure to provide adequate, evidenced, psychosocial supports for this group (within the NDIS and beyond).

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Providing Australian children and adolescents with equitable access to new and emerging therapies through clinical trials: a call to action

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 15/01/2024

Opportunities for children to benefit from novel therapies have increased substantially over the past decade. Change is needed to maximise these opportunities, particularly in the paediatric trial environment. Investment and a coordinated national approach are needed to prevent Australian children falling behind their international peers. There is international recognition that collaborative approaches and strategic investment in paediatric clinical trials reap benefits in terms of access to clinical trials and new therapies.

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Artificial intelligence 'facing barriers'in our health system

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 15/01/2024

Barriers abound in implementing artificial intelligence across Australia's health care systems, with Queensland researchers calling for more government funding to take advantage of this emerging technology. Australia's health care system has been described as "impervious" to the allure of artificial intelligence (AI), with a lack of clinician trust and data privacy the main barriers to adopting the technology in clinical settings.

[Read More](#)

The importance of cultural humility and cultural safety in health care

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 15/01/2024

Cultural competency is the concept of understanding diverse cultural groups to provide high quality patient-centred care that is respectful of and aligned with the patient's cultural health beliefs, practices and value systems. 1 Application of this concept aims to alleviate health disparities affecting minority groups, including vulnerable populations such as immigrants, refugees, racial and ethnic minorities, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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Game on

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 15/01/2024, Marc McGowan, Page 1

Much has changed since a teenage Alex de Minaur scored what was then the self-professed "biggest" victory of his life over Milos Raonic in Brisbane six years ago. Back then, de Minaur was an 18-year-old ranked No.209 a long way from his current top10 status while Raonic already had a Wimbledon final, an Australian Open semi-final and a French Open quarterfinal on his resume.

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

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Iron competitors join mass rescue

Daily Telegraph, General News, 15/01/2024, Amanda Lulham, Page 5

Australia's top surf life savers were involved in a mass rescue of swimmers swept out to sea at Maroubra minutes after they had finished racing in the Nutri-Grain surf ironman and ironwoman series yesterday. Women's winner Lana Rogers heard the rescue call on the radio around 3pm and immediately headed out with other competitors and Maroubra SLSC members to help the swimmers in distress.

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Matt's iron will prevails

Daily Telegraph, Sport, 15/01/2024, Amanda Lulham, Page 37

When Matt Bevilacqua was a 13-year-old nipper he was so small and slow he nearly drowned while competing at an interstate surf lifesaving competition at Maroubra Beach. Now 18 years on, the kid who told his dad that same day he would get "heaps better" won his second round of the Nutri-Grain ironman series in 24 hours on the same beach - the stage for a mass rescue soon after, when 25 swimmers got caught in a freak rip.

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Lycra champion

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 15/01/2024, Leah Smith, Page 5

A cheering crowd, a sprint to the top and almost 100km of determined racing made up the final stage of the Women's Tour Down Under for 2024. Dotted across the city and the southern suburbs, trail fans settled in to watch the teams battle it out to crown the Queen of The Hill and the new leader of the pack as they head into the championship season.

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Angus has sights set on Paris and gold

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 15/01/2024, Charlie Dadds, Page 15

Having been born prematurely, Angus Hincksman was diagnosed with dysphagia and cerebral palsy shortly after birth. With the disease severely impacting both legs and his left arm as well as his ability to swallow his family began planning for a future that brought with it no certainty of even walking, according to his mum, Natalie.

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Olympic run 'left too late'

Courier Mail, General News, 15/01/2024, Hayden Johnson, Page 5

Queensland's decision-makers have left it "too late" to build major new public transport infrastructure for the Olympic Games, but minor network changes could increase capacity and ease congestion, an advocate says. The state government is being urged to develop and fast-track plans for major rail and bus upgrades with Brisbane's 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games now just eight-and-a-half years away.

Also reported by: [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [4BC \(Brisbane\)](#), [4BC \(Brisbane\)](#).

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Labor candidate vows to abolish council's Olympic committee

Courier Mail, General News, 15/01/2024, Toby Crockford, Page 11

Two months before the Brisbane local government election, Labor has vowed to cut the council Olympic advisory committee and ruled out doing deals with the Greens. But there was less clarity on where Labor lord mayoral candidate Tracey Price stands on the Gabba and RNA Showgrounds rebuild, which are under review by the state government.

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

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Triathletes make summer splash

Hobart Mercury, General News, 15/01/2024, Page 5

Whether pushing personal limits or preparing for the upcoming Ironman, Triathlon South's second triathlon in their summer series proved to be fiercely competitive, challenging even the most seasoned athletes. Cameron Wurf, a former national champion who represented Australia at the 2004 Athens Olympics in rowing, was crowned overall winner at the Triathlon Gala Day at Seven Mile Beach on Sunday. But he was pushed to the limit competing against a team with 15-year-old Jack Woodberry.

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Warriors fight for new stadium

Burnie Advocate, General News, 15/01/2024, Libby Bingham, Page 1

The Devonport Warriors Basketball Club had a remarkable year and continues to grow exponentially and achieve success on the court. Receiving the Basketball Tasmania Club of the Year award for the first time was one of the proudest moments for the 75-year-old club. The Warriors have over 1000 members and boast national and state representatives, making them one of the largest clubs in Tasmania.

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More families get swim vouchers

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 15/01/2024, Matty Holdsworth, Page 2

Hundreds of additional Queensland families are set to be afforded access to swimming lessons aimed at improving water safety among kids and reversing the state's concerning drowning statistics. The state government's SwimStart program has been doubled under the new Steven Miles leadership through an additional \$5 million injection.

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More older cyclists are dying on Australia's roads

Canberra Times, Other, 15/01/2024, Katelyn Catanzariti

Thirty years ago, older Australians made up less than one in 10 cycling fatalities on the roads. Now it is more like half. Similarly, one in 10 single cyclist deaths - not involving a second vehicle - were of people over 60 back then, whereas since 2010 they make up a third of the numbers. The worrying statistics, revealed by researchers from the University of NSW, support evidence the popular recreational activity and commuter option is proving increasingly deadly with age.

Also reported by: [Shepparton News Online \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Heart health: Database to aid cardiac research

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 15/01/2024, Page 49

Australian researchers will build the world's largest registry of sudden cardiac arrest deaths in an attempt to solve one of the most enduring mysteries of cardiovascular disease. The work, supported by

the Heart Foundation and led by Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute's Dr Elizabeth Paratz, will combine and research cardiac arrest data from two large and existing databases.

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Creativity's in flight mode

West Australian, General News, 15/01/2024, Pat Hagan, Page 15

Struggling to finish the crossword? Then you should elevate yourself like drunken tribal chemists (5,3,6). Or "climb the stairs" if you're not so good at cryptic anagrams. New research shows that walking up just two flights can help trigger those little grey cells into solving problems. It was already thought that physical activity can aid concentration by getting blood circulating to the brain, but what's not clear is just how much exercise is needed to achieve this effect.

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Considerations of delayed gastric emptying with peri-operative use of glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 15/01/2024

Glucagon-like peptide-1 (glp-1) receptor agonists (RAs), such as semaglutide, dulaglutide and liraglutide, augment glucose-dependent -cell insulin release, suppress glucagon secretion, and slow gastric emptying. In Australia, they are available as daily (liraglutide) or weekly (dulaglutide, semaglutide) subcutaneous injections; internationally, semaglutide is also available in a daily oral preparation. GLP-1 RAs have increased in popularity in recent years due to their potent effect on glycaemia and adiposity, as well as their cardiovascular benefits in patients with type 2 diabetes. 1, 2, 3

[Read More](#)

From magic mirrors to tell-all toilet seats - the latest in medical technology

SBS, Other, 14/01/2024

From gadgets for the elderly to selfie mirrors that can predict the risk of heart attack, health tech is a big trend at this year's CES tech show. The innovations make monitoring health simpler and more portable than ever – with AI powering many of the devices.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Alice Springs addiction program sees engagement quadruple after introducing Aboriginal leadership

ABC Online, Other, 14/01/2024, Charmayne Allison

Sitting under the shade of a gum tree against the soaring red backdrop of Simpsons Gap on the outskirts of Alice Springs, Tyrone Lynch reflects on the loneliest time of his life. "There were times I pretty much had nowhere," he said. "And where do you go when you've got nowhere to go? What do you do?" Years ago, the Arrernte and Anmatjere man was locked in a seemingly hopeless battle with alcoholism.

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

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OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Mozzie surge alert sounded

Shepparton News, General News, 15/01/2024, Gabriel Garcia, Page 5

Health officials are warning of the dangers of being around floodwater, including the inevitable large number of mosquitoes. Those in areas impacted by flooding are advised never to enter, swim or allow children to swim or play in floodwater. Floodwater can be contaminated by overflowing sewerage or septic systems, farm or industrial waste and other chemicals.

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Q fever warning

Shepparton News Online, Other, 14/01/2024

People who work with cattle, sheep and goats are being urged to assess their risk to Q fever this summer. Q fever is a serious bacterial infection which survives in the dust created by the summer sun. The disease is spread to humans from animals. It can cause flu-like symptoms that can be severe. Some people experience long-term health issues following infection.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Call for lipid disorder action plan amid increase in heart disease

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 15/01/2024

An action plan is needed to care for people with lipid disorders in Australia to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease. Cardiovascular disease (CVD) remains our nation's biggest killer, with a frequency of one in four deaths due to CVD. [...] Icosapent ethyl is cost-effective, recommended by the guidelines for hypertriglyceridemia of the American College of Cardiology and is now approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

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OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

Call to expand drug tests

Canberra Times, General News, 15/01/2024, Jasper Lindell, Page 1

A national network of pill testing sites would minimise the harm caused by drugs and save lives, the ACT's Population Health Minister has said, after researchers discovered three new types of drugs in Canberra and recommended expanded drug market monitoring. Emma Davidson backed the suggestion of researchers, who have again recommended a drug testing network that could act like infectious disease monitoring, which tracks emerging health risks and allows health authorities to prepare and respond.

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Drug law reform must be a priority for NSW Labor

Sydney Morning Herald, Editorials, 15/01/2024, Page 22

After a slow and sometimes bumpy start to Labor's return to power in Macquarie Street, the new year offers a slew of opportunities for the fledgling Minns government. Housing reform, public sector pay negotiations, energy policy and infrastructure delivery are key issues Labor will need to tackle over the coming 12 months.

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Even more bricks of cocaine wash up on Australian shores. Now baffled cops have been forced to call in an expert to help solve the mystery

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 14/01/2024, Olivia Day

A marine expert will probe how long bricks of cocaine washing up on beaches along the NSW coast

have been in the ocean before being picked up by beach-goers. Up to 213kg of cocaine has been discovered on the coastline between Sydney and Newcastle since December 22, with 90kg of the drug found in the New Year.

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Fatal heroin overdose in Australia in the 2020s

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 15/01/2024

While many other drugs get national attention, a significant number of people still die from heroin overdose. Doctors and the general public could be forgiven for assuming that the "heroin problem" is no longer with us. In recent years, the focus of the media has been squarely on drugs such as methamphetamine, cocaine, and 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA; also known as ecstasy) ([here](#)). While these are clearly worthy of serious discussion, little recent attention has been given to heroin.

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FOOD STANDARDS

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AICIS

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