



Australian Government  
Department of Health  
and Aged Care

# TODAY'S NEWS

Tuesday, 16th 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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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [The Age \(page 1\)](#) reports that analysis published by the federal health department has found that an additional 450,000 Australians per year will seek out prescriptions for vapes, bringing the total amount of GP appointments for vape prescriptions to over one million.
- [The Age \(page 1\)](#) reports that a new study from Monash University has found that 64 deaths from drug overdoses between 2000 and 2019 could have been prevented using pill testing, bolstering calls for high-risk events to include pill testing sites.
- The [Herald Sun \(page 1\)](#) reports that the drug-checking service CanTEST identified three unknown substances in June 2023 that mimic the effects of MDMA and ketamine, with researchers issuing warnings that little is known about the effects of the drugs.
- The [Australian Financial Review \(page 7\)](#) reports that the former deputy chief medical officer, Nick Coatsworth, has said in a submission to the Covid-19 inquiry that the government's Covid-19 pandemic response during the vaccine-administering phase was too harsh. The inquiry was

announced by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Health Minister Mark Butler in September last year.

- The [\*\*Sydney Morning Herald \(page 14\)\*\*](#) reports that the NSW government has walked back its proposal for safe staffing ratios in intensive care units, which could have seen less-qualified nurses care for critically ill patients.
- The [\*\*Daily Telegraph \(page 11\)\*\*](#) reports that researchers at the University of NSW's School of Optometry and Vision Science have found a correlation between increased screen use and Myopia (short-sightedness).
- [\*\*The ABC \(online\)\*\*](#) reports that a study published in the Medical Journal of Australia has found that smoke emitted from domestic wood heaters has caused the premature deaths of 269 people in the Sydney Greater Metropolitan Area and 65 deaths in Tasmania, leading some states and territories to begin banning the heaters.
- [\*\*The ABC \(online\)\*\*](#) reports that Queensland Premier Steven Miles has not yet begun the 60-day review of the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games. Mr Miles previously labelled the \$2.7 billion Gabba redevelopment as "divisive".

## MINISTER BUTLER

### Vapes ban forecast to spur million GP visits

Age, General News, 16/01/2024, Natassia Chrysanthos, Page 1

About 450,000 more Australians are expected to seek out prescriptions for nicotine vapes each year, which will require almost a million new GP visits, according to newly released Health Department analysis that backs the government's world-first vape reforms. [...] The success of Health Minister Mark Butler's world-leading crackdown on vaping will rely on those imports being quashed and people pursuing the medical vaping pathway instead.

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

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### COVID-19 rules too extreme

Australian Financial Review, General News, 16/01/2024, John Kehoe, Page 7

Australia's attempt to "control at all costs" COVID-19 went on for too long and states should be stripped of their powers to make disease control rules during pandemics, the country's former deputy chief medical officer says.

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

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### \$188.5m pledged

Pharmacy Daily, General News, 15/01/2024, Page 1

The Federal Govt has committed \$188.5m over four years to the Australian Border Force to deliver a new compliance model in partnership with States and Territories to crack down on the importation of illegal tobacco. From 01 Jan this year, nicotine vaping products have been only available through pharmacies and only for therapeutic reasons as determined by doctors and nurse practitioners. [...] "Reducing availability of illicit tobacco is critical to tobacco control," said the Federal Health Minister Mark Butler.

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

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### STI testing no longer taboo

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 15/01/2024, Gregory Kyle

Government kicks off new 'Beforeplay' campaign to boost testing for sexually transmitted infections  
Australians are being urged to undergo regular testing for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in response to surging numbers of case of syphilis, gonorrhoea and chlamydia.

## **Fears Australia's world-first vaping crackdown will drive more people to smoke cigarettes - as it's revealed 'one million' GP visits will be needed to fill vape prescriptions**

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 16/01/2024, Ashley Nickel

Australia's world-first crackdown on vaping could drive more people to smoke tobacco or use black market vapes, a Health Department analysis has warned. New legislation enforced from January 1, banned the sale of nicotine vapes in specialised retailers and convenience stores. [...] ' Health minister Mark Butler last week warned businesses still selling illegal vapes that they're going to have to find another way to make money - but refused to explain just how he was going to stop the booming illegal trade.

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

MSN Australia, Other, 15/01/2024, 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. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the crackdown would help to "stamp out" vaping and cut smoking rates, as well as deal with criminal syndicates seeking to profit from the import ban."

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## **New STI awareness campaign launches**

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 15/01/2024

The campaign, which is targeting young people, is looking to encourage safe sex and regular testing. A new campaign will run for nine weeks, aiming to help reverse a recent increase in STIs among young people. [...] Announced by Federal Health and Aged Care Minister Mark Butler on Sunday, the campaign known as 'Beforeplay' will run for nine weeks on social media and online.

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## **Surging STI rates among young Australians prompts health campaign**

SBS, Other, 15/01/2024

A new campaign aimed at combating surging rates of sexually transmitted infections has been launched by the Federal government. It aims to educate and raise awareness of STI prevention, with a focus on testing and promotion of safe sex behaviours. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler launched the 'Beforeplay' campaign which encourages people to do their part in combating the spread of infections by getting tested regularly and practising safe sex.

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## **The JN.1 variant is driving Australia's COVID case spike. How protected are we?**

SBS, Other, 15/01/2024, Emma Brancatisano

Health authorities are reporting a surge in COVID cases in some states, driven by a variant called JN.1 which experts say is better at evading our immune system. Here's what we know. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler described the summer increase as part of a "regular cycle" of waves caused by new Omicron sub-variants.

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## **ABC News, ABC News , 15/01/2024**

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. The Federal Government is launching a new \$190mi crackdown on illegal tobacco and vapes nationwide.

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## 2GB, Afternoons, 15/01/2024, Michael McLaren

Interview with Member for Wide Bay Llew O'Brien on the crackdown on illegal tobacco. Michael McLaren recalls Health Minister Mark Butler announced new rules in relation to disposable vapes and the Government announced more than \$180m will go towards stopping illegal tobacco making its way to Australia. O'Brien notes a portion of the money from the sale of illicit tobacco is going towards an organised crime network that will be dealing and exploiting vulnerable women in the sex trade.

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## MINISTER WELLS

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

PS News, Other, 15/01/2024, 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. [...] 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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## ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

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## DEPARTMENT

### Public service divided over ChatGPT

The Australian, General News, 16/01/2024, Rosie Lewis, Page 3

An "alarming" split has been revealed within the federal public service over whether to use artificial intelligence tool ChatGPT, with Home Affairs, the Reserve Bank of Australia and AttorneyGeneral's Department among many that allow the chatbot. [...] Departments that haven't responded to Senator Hume include Defence, Finance, Prime Minister and Cabinet, and Health and Aged Care.

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### Support on the way

Community Mental Health Australia (CMHA) are moving forward with cautious optimism after good news that the CMHA has welcomed the recommendation for foundational community-based mental health and psychosocial support outside of the NDIS, which will be implemented with 50:50 funding from the National Cabinet. [...] "Clearly alternative pathways are needed to channel future demand and to help meet the massive gap that is being revealed in the current national assessment of unmet need being commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.

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## **‘A real gift to women's health': The Pap smear era is over. Enter the DIY test**

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 15/01/2024, Aisha Dow

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. [...] About 70 per cent of the 800 women diagnosed with cervical cancer in Australia annually have never undergone a cervical screening test or were overdue for one, according to the federal Health Department.

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

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## **Rina White has run a marathon to raise awareness for stillbirth**

The Mercury, Other, 15/01/2024, Catherine Duffy

Honouring her youngest son, Millaa Millaa mother Rina White, aims to raise funds and awareness for families grieving the loss of stillborn children. [...] Figures from the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care reveal one in six babies are stillborn every day, affecting more than 2,000 Australian families each year.

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

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## **Three new party drugs sniffed out at pill testing site**

Central Western Daily, Other, 15/01/2024, Dominic Giannini

Scientists have sniffed out three new recreational drugs at Australia's only fixed pill testing site. The party drugs have similar effects to MDMA, also known as ecstasy, and ketamine, which is used as a medical anaesthetic. [...] Harm reduction strategies such as pill testing were a matter for the states and territories, the federal health department said.

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

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## **RBA, AFP, AusPost caught up in law firm hack**

Information Age ACS, Other, 16/01/2024, Leonard Bernardone

List of affected government entities finally revealed. The Reserve Bank of Australia, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the Australian Federal Police are among 62 government entities that had sensitive data stolen during last year's Russia-linked hack at HWL Ebsworth. [...] Department of Health and Aged Care 33.

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## **National COVID-19 Update: Vaccination programs have been extended**

National Disability Services (NDS), Other, 15/01/2024

What you need to know Vaccines remain free from GPs, pharmacies, and other primary healthcare providers until the end of the year. In-reach vaccination for people in aged care and disability accommodation will also continue. [...] More information about COVID-19 booster doses, including who should get one, is on the Department of Health and Aged Care website .

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## **‘Bath salts': Scary finds at Canberra's pill testing site**

Scientists in Canberra have discovered three new party drugs at Australia's only fixed pill testing site, and have called for more testing across Australia. [...] The federal health department said harm reduction strategies are a matter for the states and territories.

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## CMO denies he's lost track of covid numbers

The Medical Republic, Other, 15/01/2024, Cate Swannell

If Professor Paul Kelly is clear on the true number of covid cases in the country, then he's on his Pat Malone. Chief Medical Officer Professor Paul Kelly has denied that Australia has "lost track" of community transmission of covid despite a DoHAC national case tracker described as a "dog's breakfast" last week by a leading epidemiologist.

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## CORONAVIRUS

### More people turning up at EDs as fresh COVID variant drives new surge of cases

Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, Other, 15/01/2024, Abhranil Hazra

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 said the rise in case numbers was putting more people, especially the more vulnerable, at risk.

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### JN.1 variant triggers COVID-19 surge

SBS, Other, 15/01/2024

Several states in Australia are seeing a surge in COVID cases driven by the JN.1 subvariant. The variant is highly transmissible and could be serious for vulnerable parts of the population. But most elderly Australians are not up to date with COVID vaccine booster shots, and that's causing concern among experts.

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### Is Australia floundering? We offer enlightenment amid the COVID-19 chaos

Australian Doctor, Other, 15/01/2024, Carmel Sparke

Respected epidemiologist Professor Adrian Esterman sheds light on JN.1, its earlier cousins and what the year might hold. Reading through Professor Adrian Esterman's responses to our questions, you may get the uncomfortable feeling that we're floundering under the current COVID-19 wave.

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### Stay COVID-safe

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 15/01/2024

Nsw Health is reminding customers to keep practising COVID-safe behaviours, as COVID-19 remains at high levels across the state. The latest NSW Health Respiratory Surveillance Report for the fortnight ending 06 Jan 2024 indicated that COVID-19 transmission in NSW is currently at a higher level than during last year's winter peak, while in the greater Sydney area, it is approaching levels not seen since Dec 2022.

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### 2CC, Canberra Live, 15/01/2024, Leon Delaney

Interview with Australian Medical Association president Steve Robson on COVID vaccines. Robson

says it is very clear that vaccination has literally saved millions of lives and it is a pity that misinformation and disinformation are still circulating in the community.

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## ABC Radio Sydney, Breakfast, 15/01/2024, Simon Marnie

Interview with University of Queensland vaccine researcher and infectious diseases Paul Griffin on COVID vaccines. Simon Marnie notes the number of COVID cases have spiked to levels not seen since the summer peak in December 2022. Griffin says people who are not sure whether they are eligible or what they are eligible for should have a chat with their GP or pharmacist.

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

### What does the latest research say about how to reduce dementia risk?

ABC Online, Other, 15/01/2024, Fiona Blackwood

You may be aware that smoking, lack of exercise, poor diet and too much alcohol are linked to dementia and stroke. But there are some other, perhaps surprising, ways you can reduce your risk of cognitive impairment as you age. Sleep, socialising, challenging your brain, and small amounts of alcohol have all been found to improve brain health.

Similar coverage reported by: [Your Life Choices \(Online\)](#).

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### Man, 80, is charged with sexually assaulting elderly woman with dementia at an aged care home

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 15/01/2024, Freddy Pawle

Elderly man charged with alleged sexual assault Accused of assaulting 87-year-old at aged care home  
Published: | Updated: An elderly man accused of sexually assaulting an 87-year-old woman with dementia at an aged care home has been released on bail. William John Newbold, 80, was arrested at his home in Asquith, in Sydney 's northwest, on Friday shortly after police were called to a nearby aged care facility to reports a woman, 87, had been sexually assaulted.

Similar coverage reported by: [HelloCare \(Online\)](#).

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### WA's older advocates, community champions stand tall

The Senior, Other, 15/01/2024

While caring for his mother for eight years, Benito Chan kept a diary that he later turned into a play. His work in raising awareness of and empathy for those living with dementia and their carers has led to him being the Metropolitan recipient of the 2023 WA Seniors Award

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### St Vincent's Health Australia's 19 storey six-stage 'wellness community' in Brisbane gains preliminary approval

The Weekly Source, Other, 15/01/2024, Ian Horswill

The nation's largest Not For Profit health and aged care provider says a "changing landscape of aged care" is behind its plan to redevelop the site containing St Vincent's Private Hospital Brisbane and St Vincent's Aged Care Kangaroo Point. Originally built in 1954, the Mt Olivet Hospital was the first dedicated facility for the elderly and was Queensland's first modern hospice.

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### 5AA, Afternoons, 15/01/2024, Angie McBride

Interview with Australian Medical Association SA president John Williams on whether a new public

hospital in South Australia is necessary. Williams says he is not sure a new public hospital is needed but he notes they do need increased capacity. He states they need to look at prevention and increasing the capacity of general practice.

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## POPULATION HEALTH

### Cash targets illicit smokes

Herald Sun, General News, 16/01/2024, Page 11

The government will inject \$188.5m into stamping out illegal tobacco imports which can be used to prop up the income for organised crime outfits. The funds have been committed across four years, with the Australian Border Force working with federal, state and territory policing partners and agencies in stamping out the illicit trade.

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### Wood heater smoke estimated to kill 63 in ACT each year, prompting calls for national ban

ABC Online, Other, 15/01/2024, Alison Branley

Researchers are calling for new wood heaters to be banned from urban areas and existing ones to be phased out after their study showed wood heaters could be killing up to 63 people a year in the ACT alone. The study published on Monday in the Medical Journal of Australia found there were a similar number of deaths attributed to domestic wood heaters in the ACT each year as they estimated died prematurely in the territory due to the extreme smoke from the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires.

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### Vaping lands 178 people in hospital

Retail Pharmacy, Other, 15/01/2024

As more research emerges on the dangers of vaping and the health problems. Data released from Private Healthcare Australia- the peak body for health insurers- has revealed that seven children under 15 have been hospitalised due to vaping-related disorders or injuries since 2000.

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## CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

### Screens take toll on vision

Daily Telegraph, Edition Changes, 16/01/2024, Page 12

Scientists are beginning to link an increase in screen time with rising levels of short-sightedness, with fears current rates could result in half the world having mild vision impairment by 2050. Myopia, which causes a person's long-distance vision to become blurred, can also increase the risk of someone developing severe eye conditions like glaucoma, retinal detachment, cataracts and myopic macular degeneration.

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

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### Many skip check-ups due to cost concerns

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 15/01/2024, Page 6

Imagination is required to come up with novel methods of encouraging better health care 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 check-ups is making that task a no-brainer.

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## Imugene bowel cancer vaccine trial a potential game changer

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 15/01/2024, Michael Philipps

Immunotherapy expert biotech firm Imugene is seeking to put its potentially ground-breaking bowel cancer vaccine known as "PD1-Vaxx" to the test with around 44 patients set to be enrolled in a phase two trial over the next 18 months. The trial will take place across 6 sites in Australia and another 4 in the UK. PD1-Vaxx is currently in the development stage of a bid to target colorectal (bowel) cancer and the most common type of lung cancer known as "non-small cell lung cancer" (NSCLC).

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## Could new insulin spray on your arm end the need for diabetes jab? Hope in sight for millions who currently inject up to three time a day

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 16/01/2024, Pat Hagan

A trial with patients is due to start in Norway to see if the spray can control blood-sugar levels as effectively as the injections do. Patients squirt the insulin directly on to their inner forearm, where skin tends to be thinner, allowing easier absorption. Within minutes, it gets absorbed into the bloodstream, where it helps cells mop up sugar from the blood to use as fuel for energy.

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## Channel 10, 10 News First, 15/01/2024, Candice Wyatt

A record number of women across Australia have taken up the option of self-administering pap smears, boosting their chances of detecting cervical cancer early. Australia is now on track to become the first country in the world to eliminate the potentially deadly disease.

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## ABC Radio Adelaide, Mornings, 15/01/2024, David Bevan

Interview with Royal Adelaide Hospital consultant rheumatologist and Arthritis SA medical advisor Catherine Hill on polymyalgia rheumatica. Hill says many types of arthritis are managed by general practitioners and she notes GPs are the backbone of the health care system.

Continuing interview on: [ABC Radio Adelaide \(Adelaide\)](#), [ABC Radio Adelaide \(Adelaide\)](#).

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## ABC Radio Sydney, Drive, 15/01/2024, Richard Glover

Interview with Australian Centre for the Prevention of Cervical Cancer executive director Marion Saville on the new self-testing for cervical cancer. Richard Glover says the test is proving very popular and the Government is expanding eligibility for receiving the kit. Saville says the test is accurate, which is the fantastic news.

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## ABC Radio Sydney, Drive, 15/01/2024, Richard Glover

Interview with MindEar co-founder Matthieu Recugnat on the new app is designed to help people suffering from tinnitus. Recugnat says the app tries to draw the attention of the brain away from the constant ringing and reduce stress and anxiety levels.

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## PRIMARY CARE

### Government backs down on less-qualified nurses in ICUs

The Minns government has backed down on a contentious proposal to allow less-qualified enrolled nurses to care for critically ill patients in NSW hospitals. Critical care nurses were alarmed when a taskforce of health bureaucrats and the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association last week proposed changes to include enrolled nurses in new safe-staffing ratios for intensive care units that would ensure there was one nurse for each patient.

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## Support group's funding boost

Central Western Daily, General News, 16/01/2024, Page 5

A Central West not-for-profit supporting families who have lost their child during pregnancy or in infancy has received a boost from a generous bank donation. The Greater Union Bank awarded the group \$2000 to help with their efforts in the Central West. Established in 2023, Orange-based Central West Pregnancy and Infant Loss (CWPAIL) aims to provide individualised bereavement care for parents and extended families who have experienced this devastating loss.

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## 'Year of delivery' in health claims

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 16/01/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 3

The Queensland government has declared 2023 as the "year of delivery" in healthcare - but sidestepped repeated criticism the state's health system remained in "crisis". [...] A significant backlog in scanning also resulted in the Australian Medical Association of Queensland revealing the state's doctors had so little faith in the public health system they were referring patients to private radiologists for scans to avoid life-threatening delays.

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## Deadass Podcast's host Bryan Perry on mission with Nicholas Smithson to talk about death openly

ABC Online, Other, 15/01/2024, Jasmine Hines

Central Queensland's Nicholas Smithson was diagnosed with stage 4 melanoma. With his friend and funeral director Bryan Perry, he's trying to demystify death. Researcher says Australia is a "death-denying" country, but there are practical ways you can support dying loved ones. The tradesman spent years labouring in the sun and was diagnosed with melanoma when he was 38 years old.

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## The biggest political hurdles the SA government faces in 2024

ABC Online, Other, 15/01/2024, Rory McClaren and Stephanie Richards

"We've got a big job to do." That's what South Australia's Premier Peter Malinauskas told the Labor Party faithful the night he was elected to office. The enormity of the job was not overstated. Labor made more than 700 commitments, estimated to cost taxpayers about \$3 billion, in the lead-up to the March 2022 state election.

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## Sky News Live, The Kenny Report, 15/01/2024, Caleb Bond

Interview with SA Premier Peter Malinauskas on state politics. Malinauskas says over 70% of the ambulances are now rolling up on time in comparison to 36%, but he concedes there is still work to do to reduce ramping. He states the plan is about putting more beds into hospitals.

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## ABC Radio Adelaide, Mornings, 15/01/2024, David Bevan

Panel discussion with Dr Penny Need, Dr Robyn Sainsbury and Dr Dan Byrne on general practice and waiting times. Need says they have no trainees in their practice this year, which is the first time in 13 years. Sainsbury compares the hospital system to the Titanic and she says she is hoping Medicare is not lost to Australia.

Continuing panel discussion on: [ABC Radio Adelaide \(Adelaide\)](#), [ABC Radio Adelaide \(Adelaide\)](#), [ABC Radio](#)

## ABC Radio Brisbane, Mornings, 15/01/2024, Rebecca Levingston

Interview with Queensland Opposition Leader David Crisafulli on state politics. Crisafulli says his plan when they are in government include enabling Queenslanders will see what is happening in their hospitals in real time data within 100 days. He states the funding will go to the health and hospital networks, not just centrally administrated.

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## MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

### Why is psychedelic breathwork the latest wellness trend?

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 15/01/2024, Troy Nankervis

Forget 30-day meditation retreats, just ten minutes of controlled breathwork has been found to alleviate a plethora of mental and physical health issues. Here's why the practice is taking off in Australia right now. Fast carving out a reputation as an incredible antidote to stress, sleep problems and burnout, breathwork is making a rapid rise as one of Australia's newest wellness trends.

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

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### What is ADHD 'parent training'?

Canberra Times, Other, 15/01/2024, Cher McGillivray

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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## ABC, 7:30, 15/01/2024, Laura Tingle

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide says it is facing ongoing issues with government departments and accessing the vital information it needs to do its work. Navy veteran Brian French has been successful in having his PTSD and other conditions recognised and treatments paid for, but he says the lengthy delay processing his compensation claim and the scrutiny over every minute detail of his time in service worsened his condition. Last September, Royal Commissioner Nick Kaldas revealed he was being stymied and stonewalled by government departments when trying to access documents like complaints and suicide data, which are necessary for the Commission to do its work.

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## CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

No relevant coverage

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## HEALTH WORKFORCE

## Workers to step away from abuse, violence, spitting

Border Mail, General News, 16/01/2024, Anthony Bunn, Page 5

Ramming with equipment, spitting and verbal abuse over the phone - these are some of the 30 to 40 nasty incidents Albury Wodonga Health staff endure on average each week. The ugly situations were outlined at the media launch of a new campaign by the health service to empower staff and to urge patients and their families to behave respectfully.

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## Grads living the dream

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 16/01/2024, Bethany Westwood, Page 1

An ambitious group of 74 qualified, job-ready North Queenslanders have supercharged the local Hospitality and Individual Support industries after graduating from the North Queensland Toyota Cowboys' Dream, Believe, Achieve program. Friday's graduation ceremony marked the first time the program celebrated graduates from its 14-week Certificate III in Individual Support with an additional 65 completing a Certificate III in Hospitality.

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## Queensland Health pleased with what they delivered in 2023

The Courier Mail, Other, 15/01/2024, Jackie Sinnerton

Acting Health Minister Mark Ryan made a big call about the state's healthcare system. Queensland Opposition Leader David Crisafulli says the state's government "hasn't properly listened" to frontline public servants because they are under "more pressure than ever".

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

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## Proactive recruitment aims to bring nurse practitioners to all corners of the NT

Gold Coast Bulletin, Other, 15/01/2024, Fia Walsh

A new way for nurses to apply for senior roles in the Territory has launched in an attempt to address chronic staff shortages continuing to plague the health sector. An online register of interest allows nurses and nurses interested in upskilling to proactively apply for roles across all regions of the NT without having to wait for positions to be advertised.

Also reported by: [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#).

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## NSW healthcare students eligible for up to \$12,000 as government works to rebuild workforce

9News, Other, 15/01/2024, Eleanor Wilson

Students enrolled in a healthcare degree in NSW can from today apply for up to \$12,000 in study subsidies as the state government works on its election promise for a system overhaul. In August last year, Premier Chris Minns revealed 6500 nurses and midwives were leaving the NSW public health service each year in favour of interstate and private sector jobs.

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## 2GB, Breakfast, 15/01/2024, Mark Levy

Interview with New South Wales Health Minister Ryan Park on the New South Wales Government's plan to contribute \$4,000 a year for three years for new health care students. Park notes they are creating a pipeline of future health care workers who can deliver the health services and the applications are open from today to new students as well as existing students.

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## ABC Radio Sydney, Mornings, 15/01/2024, Suzanne Hill

Interview with New South Wales health Minister Ryan Park on the new subsidy program for health care degrees. Park says the program is designed to make sure that they have a pipeline of health care workers and it is a part of the State Government's commitment to rebuild the New South Wales health system.

Continuing interview on: [ABC Radio Sydney \(Sydney\)](#).

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## Channel 10, 10 News First, 15/01/2024, Lachlan Kennedy

For the first time, nursing students will be able to apply for thousands of dollars in subsidies from the NSW Government while they study. But with the rising cost of living and the end of a free parking scheme, some say it is not enough to offset the many hours of unpaid placement.

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## Channel 7, Seven News, 15/01/2024, Michael Usher and Angela Cox

Students are being offered thousands of dollars a year to join the health system as part of a new study subsidy in NSW, but there are fears another move by the government could see more nurses leave. From next month, health care workers will be dealt another cost of living blow as the Government is refusing to extend free hospital parking for staff, which first introduced during the pandemic.

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## TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

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## MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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## BENEFITS INTEGRITY

### GP denies killing his mum

Hobart Mercury, General News, 16/01/2024, Amber Wilson, Page 6

A former doctor has given evidence, against his wishes, into the death inquest of his two parents one of whom he was accused of murdering with a cocktail of palliative care drugs. Stephen Edwards, who is ill himself with liver cancer, answered a series of questions on Monday about the March 2016 deaths of his parents, David and Nelda Edwards.

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## HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

### I help kids who refuse to go to school. This is what I've learnt

ABC Online, Other, 15/01/2024, Rebecca Plunkett and Kellie Scott

Rebecca Plunkett has been working closely with students refusing to attend school for almost a decade, and feels there is a better way to describe it. "I prefer school avoidance," says the acting

assistant principal at Travancore School in Naarm/Melbourne. "Refusal has a negative association. When we talk about avoidance, we acknowledge that they avoid going to school because it is too emotionally distressing for them."

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## Coaching service helps you be your best self

The Senior, Other, 15/01/2024

A new service is service helping South Australians be active, eat well, and reduce the risk of chronic disease. Titled Better Health Coaching Service, it offers a is a free, evidence-based and confidential program linking eligible South Australians with a qualified health professional over the phone.

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## SPORT

### Demon passes his first test

Herald Sun, Edition Changes, 16/01/2024, Page 1

Alex de Minaur was well on his way to answering one of the biggest questions posed of him throughout his career before a hobbled Milos Raonic withdrew from their Australian Open first round clash on Monday night. Former Wimbledon finalist Raonic walked to the net trailing 6-7 (6) 6-3 2-0 in the third set to shake hands with the Aussie No.1, who will take the hopes of his home nation on his shoulders into the second round later this week.

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

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### Queensland government yet to begin promised 60-day review of Olympic Games infrastructure

ABC Online, Other, 15/01/2024, Jack McKay

Queensland Premier Steven Miles has revealed his government is yet to kick off its promised 60-day review of the master plan for the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games. The newly installed premier cast doubt over the future of key Games infrastructure, such as the controversial \$2.7 billion Gabba redevelopment, when he announced the review in December.

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## HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

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## FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

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## OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

### Some festival deaths preventable

More than 60 music festival drug-related deaths over 20 years could potentially have been prevented, with experts saying the new study analysing national coronial records bolsters the case for pill testing. The deaths include dozens of Australian festivalgoers who died after consuming dangerous levels of MDMA, often known as ecstasy, the same substance involved in a mass overdose at an electronic music festival in Melbourne this month that left a teenager in critical condition.

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

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## Alarm as new drugs identified

Herald Sun, General News, 16/01/2024, Sarah Booth, Page 1

Three dangerous party drugs never before seen in Australia have been found on our shores while a teenager is still fighting for life after the mass overdoses at a Flemington music festival. The drug-checking service CanTEST found three unknown substances in June 2023, and Australian National University research has revealed they were compounds that mimic MDMA and ketamine.

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

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## There are no easy answers for drug testing

Canberra Times, General News, 16/01/2024, Milad Haghani, Page 16

The prevalence of illicit drug use is notably higher among music event attendees compared to the general population. Many attendees pre-plan their drug use, while others are influenced by the environment, making spontaneous decisions, often driven by peer dynamics.

Also reported by: [Western Advocate \(Bathurst\)](#), [Central Western Daily \(Orange\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Wollongong\)](#), [Daily Liberal \(Dubbo\)](#), [Ballarat Courier \(Ballarat\)](#), [Bendigo Advertiser \(Bendigo\)](#).

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## Three new party drugs sniffed out at testing site

Daily Advertiser, General News, 16/01/2024, Page 7

Scientists have sniffed out three new recreational drugs at Australia's only fixed pill testing site. The party drugs have similar effects to MDMA, also known as ecstasy, and ketamine, which is used as a medical anaesthetic. They were discovered by a team of scientists at the Australian National University at the CanTEST site in Canberra.

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

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## Canberra chemists identify three new recreational drugs after mystery substances turn up at Australia's only fixed pill-testing site

ABC Online, Other, 15/01/2024, Tahlia Roy

Three mysterious recreational drugs have surfaced for the first time in Australia with chemists describing them as "unexpected, new psychoactive substances". Users had presented the trio of previously unknown drugs to Canberra's fixed pill-testing site, CanTEST, within the past six months. But despite the operation's ability to identify substances and their purities, the three samples in question had CanTEST scientists scratching their heads.

Also reported by: [The Guardian \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [SBS \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Ballarat Courier \(Online\)](#).

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## ABC News, ABC National News, 15/01/2024, Lorna Dunkley

Scientists at Australia's only fixed pill testing service, CanTEST, have discovered several new recreational drugs. The revelation comes just days after several people suffered overdoses at a music festival in Victoria.

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## ABC News, News Breakfast, 15/01/2024, Michael Rowland and Bridget Brennan

Interview with Murrup Barak, Melbourne Institute for Indigenous Development Director Inala Cooper on the new of the day. Cooper says there are continued calls for the expansion of drug tests at music festivals after eight people were hospitalised in Melbourne after a festival at Flemington Racecourse. She states she and the Victorian Greens support personally of more drug testing at events and she notes it has been shown that pill testing changes people's behaviour.

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## 2CC, Canberra Live, 15/01/2024, Leon Delaney

Interview with ANU Research School of Chemistry Professor Malcolm McLeod on pill testing. Leon Delaney says three new recreational drugs that have never been reported in Australia before have been identified after being checked at CanTEST, Australia's only fixed site pill testing service and he adds McLeod has called to extend pill testing nationwide. McLeod states pill testing is a good way to monitor the drug market and find out what is out there.

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## THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

### TGA 'closely monitoring' suicide and depression risk with asthma drug

Australian Doctor, Other, 15/01/2024, Rachel Carter

Both the European and US medicines regulators have recommended changes to the product information for montelukast in recent years. The TGA is "closely monitoring" reports of suicide, sleep disturbances and other potential adverse neuropsychiatric events in children prescribed the asthma medication montelukast.

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### Does montelukast need a warning label?

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 15/01/2024

The asthma medication is known to cause behavioural and neuropsychiatric disturbance that in rare cases have been linked to suicidal ideation. The widely used asthma drug montelukast can cause rare but serious side effects, including suicidal ideation. [...] ' Dr Hancock says these discussions can be aided by printing the Consumer Medicines Information (CMI) sheet, which is available through prescribing software or directly through the Therapeutic Goods Administration, along with the Montelukast Fact Sheet from Asthma Australia

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