



Australian Government  
Department of Health  
and Aged Care

# TODAY'S NEWS

Friday, 2nd February 2024

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Australian](#)** (page 1) reports mothers drinking alcohol during pregnancy is a factor driving childhood learning difficulties and youth crime, Queensland's incoming Minister for Education and Youth Justice Di Farmer says.
- **[The Age](#)** (page 1) reports poor governance within the Victorian Institute of Forensic Mental Health is driving aggression in prison hospitals and jails, placing inmates and workers at risk, a new report by WorkSafe Victoria has found.
- **[The Age](#)** (page 1) reports Victoria's Health Department is investigating whistleblower claims ten people were falsely admitted as patients at the Colac urgent care clinic during a visit by state Minister Mary-Anne Thomas last year. *Also reported by: [Herald Sun](#), [The Border Mail](#), [Daily Mail Australia](#), [The Guardian](#)*
- The **[Courier Mail](#)** (page 1) reports the rate of perinatal deaths in Queensland rose from 7.8 per 1000 births in 2018 to 11.5 per 1000 in 2022, Productivity Commission data has revealed. *Also reported by: [Townsville Bulletin](#), [ABC Online](#)*
- The **[Herald Sun](#)** (page 3) reports Minister for Health Mark Butler has welcomed the Australian Institute of Sport's new concussion protocols that would see players benched for three weeks

following a head knock to prevent brain damage. *Also reported by:* [West Australian](#), [ABC Online](#), [Daily Mail](#), [The New Daily](#), [Sky News](#)

- The [Northern Territory News](#) (page 3) reports NT Health has suspended the use of its \$259 million Acacia digital health records system from the Royal Darwin and Palmerston Regional hospitals' emergency departments while system "bugs" slowing operations are addressed.
- The [Herald Sun](#) (page 5) reports the government's inquiry into Australia's Covid-19 response is "not sufficient" to calculate the "full human cost of the pandemic", Australian Human Rights commissioner Lorraine Finlay has warned. *Also reported by:* [Courier Mail](#), [Hobart Mercury](#), [Northern Territory News](#), [Canberra Times](#)
- The [Sydney Morning Herald](#) (page 6) reports lab-grown bowel cancer tumours have allowed doctors to predict individual patient responses to different cancer treatments with over 80 per cent accuracy, allowing researchers at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute to broaden clinical trials. *Also reported by:* [The Age](#), [9News](#)
- The [Adelaide Advertiser](#) (page 6) reports Minister for Health Mark Butler is in talks with the mental health sector after the Productivity Commission's Government Services report revealed use of subsidised mental healthcare fell in 2022-23, despite professionals recording rising demand. *Also reported by:* [Herald Sun](#)
- The [Adelaide Advertiser](#) (page 10) reports questions have arisen about SA Health's rollout of free shingle vaccines after it directed medical centres to begin rationing Shingrix due to shortages, despite assurances from Health Minister Mark Butler of sufficient national supply.

## MINISTER BUTLER

### More taxes is making beer taste a little bitter

Daily Telegraph, General News, 02/02/2024, James O'Doherty, Page 13

Standing at the front bar of an inner Sydney pub last week, my jaw almost hit the floor. This was not from any effect of alcohol. I had not even taken a sip. [...] Instead of regulating and taxing vaping, the Health Minister Mark Butler is pursuing a total ban on cigarettes.

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

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### Regions fear rule on head knocks

Herald Sun, General News, 02/02/2024, Jade Gailberger and Jamie Pandaram, Page 3

Clubs may have to miss out Regional sporting clubs are at risk of being unable to field a team if players are benched for three weeks under new concussion protocols, a Victorian Nationals MP has warned. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler welcomed the new guidelines saying it was critical that major sporting codes take up the advice.

*Also reported by:* [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#)

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### Fewer in mental health support

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 02/02/2024, Clare Armstrong, Page 6

Fewer Australians accessed subsidised mental health care last financial year, despite soaring rates of illness, as psychologists urge Labor to increase the number of Medicare-funded psychology sessions for "complex" patients. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the additional sessions had been "bottlenecking" the supply of psychology sessions for first-time patients.

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

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### Alert on shingles vax

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 02/02/2024, Brad Crouch, Page 10

SA Health has alerted medical centres to start rationing the free shingles vaccine due to shortages

despite federal Health Minister Mark Butler previously telling The Advertiser "there is no shortage of Shingrix vaccine." A letter marked "High Importance" from SA Health's Communicable Disease Control Branch to immunisation service providers this week tells them to prioritise some patients before starting new patients on the two-dose vaccination under the \$826m program.

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## Bulk bill policy's 'relief': Gosling

Northern Territory News, General News, 02/02/2024, Harry Brill, Page 14

Solomon MP Luke Gosling says the Federal Government's bulk billing approach has eased cost of living pressures for Territorians. On November 1, the Albanese government announced it would deliver the nation's largest bulk billing investment in more than 40 years. [...] Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler claimed the government's policy had won the approval of medical experts.

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

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## Mallee residents hurting from botched Shingles vaccine rollout

Buloke Times, General News, 02/02/2024, Page 13

Mallee residents who rely on vaccinations for shingles are the victims of the Federal Government's mishandling of a now severe shingles vaccine shortage. Health Minister Mark Butler has tried to pretend his government's halting \$826 million Shingrix vaccine rollout is uncontroversial, despite promising the shingles vaccine to around 5 million older Australians.

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## New concussion guidelines are set

Central Western Daily, General News, 02/02/2024, Nick Guthrie and Melanie Dinjaski, Page 33

The major competitions in the western area are set to take on new concussion guidelines put forward by the Australian Institute of Sport. [...] Federal health minister Mark Butler told Channel Nine the new guidelines would add peace of mind for parents and others overseeing community sport.

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

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## Bulk-bill visits up slightly

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 02/02/2024, Jade Gailberger, Page 19

GP bulk-billing rates in Victoria have had the lowest increase in the country despite the federal government tripling the incentive last year. New figures show the proportion of all GP consultations that are bulk-billed increased 1.5 per cent to 78.3 per cent. [...] But Health Minister Mark Butler said bulk-billing rates had increased 4.7 per cent, or by an extra 60,000 visits, in regional Victoria.

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## \$300k Medicare savings Watt

Gold Coast Bulletin, General News, 02/02/2024, Amaani Siddeek, Page 6

Gold Coasters have saved more than \$300,000 in the two months since Medicare subsidies tripled for GP appointments, new Department of Health data released on Thursday shows. For the same time period, the city recorded 6000 extra bulk-billed GP appointments provided to residents. [...] "I don't want to steal the thunder of Mark Butler, the health and aged care minister, and I'm sure that we will have more to say in the months ahead."

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## More people delaying visit to doctor due to rising costs

Newcastle Herald, General News, 02/02/2024, Andrew Brown and Dominic Giannini, Page 4

Patients have welcomed an increase in bulk billing rates but warn more needs to be done as the cost of living soars. While there has been a 2.1 percentage point rise in the national GP bulk billing rate since November when incentives were boosted, the number of people delaying or not attending an appointment due to price has doubled. [...] The changes were making a difference for providers and patients alike, Health Minister Mark Butler said.

Also reported by: [Michael West Media \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#).

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## Bulk-billing system still on the sickbed, says Hunter doctor

Newcastle Herald, General News, 02/02/2024, Damon Cronshaw, Page 5

The federal government's bulk-billing incentives aren't enough to cover the cost of GP consultations in urban areas like Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Maitland. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said yesterday that he was working to "lift the attractiveness of general practice to medical graduates".

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

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## Codes wait to hear more on guidelines

Newcastle Herald, General News, 02/02/2024, Renee Valentine, Page 77

Northern NSW Football chief executive Peter Haynes has welcomed new community and youth concussion guidelines but is yet to discuss with the sport's governing body how they could be implemented. [...] Speaking to Channel Nine, federal health minister Mark Butler also highlighted the importance of introducing concussion officers to "make sure that the kids or the adults in community sport are being followed up by ...

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

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## Rules for head knocks released

Wimmera Mail Times, General News, 02/02/2024, Page 28

New concussion guidelines to help protect Australia's grass-roots athletes have been introduced. The guidelines, announced on Thursday by sports and medical officials, include a return-to-sport protocol aimed at ensuring a minimum three-week break between a concussion and the resumption of competitive contact or collision sport. [...] Federal health minister Mark Butler said the guidelines would add peace of mind for parents and others overseeing community sport.

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## GP cash boost lifts bulk-billing rates

The Saturday Paper, Other, 01/02/2024

New figures released by Health Minister Mark Butler show a 2.1% increase in the national bulk-billing rate in November and December – the first two months that tripled incentives for doctors to bulk bill patients ( ABC This equates to 360,000 additional bulk-billing appointments and \$15m in gap fees saved, with 202,000 GP visits in rural and regional areas;

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## New guidelines over sports concussions introduced

Canberra Times, Other, 01/02/2024

New concussion guidelines to help protect Australia's grass-roots athletes have been introduced. The guidelines, announced on Thursday by sports and medical officials, include a return-to-sport protocol aimed at ensuring a minimum three-week break between a concussion and the resumption of competitive contact or collision sport. [...] Federal health minister Mark Butler told Channel Nine the new guidelines would add peace of mind for parents and others overseeing community sport.

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

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## Australia's top medical and sporting organisations propose massive shift to concussion guidelines

West Australian, Other, 01/02/2024

New concussion guidelines to help protect Australia's grass-roots athletes have been introduced. The guidelines, announced on Thursday by sports and medical officials, include a return-to-sport protocol aimed at ensuring a minimum three-week break between a concussion and the resumption of

competitive contact or collision sport. [...] Federal health minister Mark Butler told Channel Nine the new guidelines would add peace of mind for parents and others overseeing community sport.

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## **Bulk billing on rise in the Hunter**

Newcastle Weekly, Other, 01/02/2024, Rod Thompson

The Hunter has experienced one of the largest increases in bulk billing, nationally, since the Australian Government tripled the incentive. After a decade of cuts and neglect by the Liberals, when they were in power, Labor promised to rectify the issue. [...] "Doctors' groups have called our tripling of the incentive a 'game changer' – and clearly it is," Minister for Health Mark Butler said.

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## **Labor celebrate as Medicare turns 40**

The Lismore App, Other, 01/02/2024

Today marks the 40th anniversary of Australia's universal health insurance system — Medicare. Since 1 February 1984, Medicare has been the world-class foundation of our modern health system. [...] Minister for Health, the Hon Mark Butler said, "As we mark the 40th anniversary of Medicare, it is also vital that we keep strengthening Medicare to work towards ensuring Australians can access the right care, at the right place and the right time.

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## **McCormack says Health Minister leaving regional Australians behind**

Parkes Phoenix, Other, 01/02/2024

Federal Member for Riverina Michael McCormack has expressed serious concerns for the health welfare of regional, rural and remote Australians after the Minister for Health, Mark Butler, said Australians should just "ring around" to find a bulk-billing GP in their area

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## **Look to the future as Medicare celebrates 40 years**

ABC Online, Other, 01/02/2024, Angus Randall

Medicare was brought in by the Hawke government promising the cheapest, simplest and fairest health insurance Australia's ever had. 40 years on economists say the healthcare scheme must modernise to keep up with an aging population. Featured: Bob Hawke, former Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Prime Minister Mark Butler, federal Health Minister Professor Stephen Duckett, University of Melbourne Professor Steve Robson, president, Australian Medical Association Angus Randall, Reporter

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## **Australian sporting body releases concussion guidelines for all junior, community sport**

ABC Online, Other, 01/02/2024

New concussion guidelines for junior and community sport recommend athletes wait three weeks before resuming competitive contact action. The guidelines, released today, were developed by the Australian Institute of Sport [AIS] in co-operation with Sports Medicine Australia, along with doctors and physiotherapists. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the new advice would be reassuring for parents.

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## **Multiple myeloma patients await MSAC verdict on CAR T-cell therapy to manage blood cancer**

ABC Online, Other, 01/02/2024, Hayden Smith

Barely a day goes by when Helen Buckingham doesn't check her computer for the news she has long been anticipating. The former schoolteacher turned Victorian politician, who held the seat of Koonung from 2002–06, has lived with a rare form of multiple myeloma — a type of blood cancer — for almost two decades. [...] In 2022, MSAC advised federal Health Minister Mark Butler that it "did not consider that cilta-cel provided good evidence on value for money".

## GP bulk billing rates increase after Government incentives

ABC Online, Other, 01/02/2024, Evelyn Manfield

The Federal Government says its decision to triple the incentive paid to GPs who bulk bill certain patients is paying off, with 360,000 extra trips to the doctor fully covered by Medicare. Featured: Mark Butler, Federal Health Minister Professor Steve Robson, President, Australian Medical Association

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## See the radical new concussion rules that could change Australian sport forever - especially for children

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 01/02/2024, Shayne Bugden

New concussion guidelines to help protect Australia's grassroots athletes have been introduced - and they will usher in some of the biggest changes ever made to the country's sporting landscape if adopted. [...] ' Federal health minister Mark Butler told Channel Nine the new guidelines would add peace of mind for parents and others overseeing community sport.

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## Junior sports concussion protocol welcomed by parents, clubs and experts

The New Daily, Other, 01/02/2024, Parker McKenzie

Sporting clubs, experts and politicians have welcomed new concussion protocols as a move to protect young athletes from adverse health effects.[...] The United Kingdom and New Zealand have adopted similar measures and protocols for junior athletes, and Health Minister Mark Butler said he welcomed the advice from the AIS.

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## Patients put off GP visits despite bulk billing changes

The New Daily, Other, 01/02/2024, Andrew Brown

Patients are increasingly holding off seeing a GP due to the cost of appointments, despite more clinics offering bulk billing. A Productivity Commission report revealed the number of people delaying an appointment or not attending at all due to price had doubled. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the extra financial incentives were making a difference for clinics and patients.

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## Number of Australians putting off GP visits doubles amid high appointment costs

SBS, Other, 01/02/2024, Rebecca Kazmierczak and Sara Tomevska

As Australia's universal healthcare scheme, Medicare, celebrates its 40th anniversary, new data reveals patients are increasingly avoiding visits to the doctor due to high appointment costs. It comes as the government celebrates a slight increase in bulk-billed G-P visits across the country, following its tripling of the Medicare bulk-billing incentive late last year. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler has defended Medicare, citing an improvement since this incentives were increased.

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## Need to see a doctor? The number of Australians putting off GP visits has doubled

SBS, Other, 01/02/2024

Australians have saved \$15 million in gap fees under new bulk billing initiatives for GPs, but many patients still can't afford a visit to their doctor. The number of Australians putting off visits to the GP has doubled. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the extra financial incentives were making a difference for clinics and patients.

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## Australia proposes 'world-leading' concussion guidelines for youth and

## community sport, but major codes yet to sign up to recommendations

Sky News Australia, Other, 01/02/2024, Max Melzer

The Australian Institute of Sport has released "world-leading" concussion rules aimed at reducing the risk of brain damage in youth and community sports. [...] Reacting to the new rules on Thursday, Health Minister Mark Butler welcomed the fact many organisations were on board with the higher level of protection, but said there was "more to do" to improve player welfare.

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## Labor's Covid inquiry 'not sufficient' as calls for royal commission grow

Sky News Australia, Other, 01/02/2024, Courtney Gould

Australia's human rights watchdog has warned Labor's inquiry into the Covid-19 response is "not sufficient" enough to calculate the "full human cost of the pandemic". The inquiry was criticised when it was announced last September for not having the same powers as a royal commission and excluding the decisions made solely by the states from its scope. [...] Speaking with Sky News, Health Minister Mark Butler ruled out the possibility of that inquiry being elevated to a royal commission.

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## Leap forward for healthcare affordability as national bulk billing rate sees growth of 2.1 per cent since tripling of GP incentives

Sky News Australia, Other, 01/02/2024, Heloise Vyas

New data released by the federal government has shown progress in the number of Australians receiving doctor consultations free of cost, despite the broader state of the country's medical system painting a relatively troubling picture. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said regions where bulk billing was previously a "real problem" had reaped the benefits of the government's \$3.5 billion funding boost.

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## Mark Butler says tripled incentives have 'stopped the slide' after GP bulk-billing rises

Australian Doctor, Other, 01/02/2024, Rachel Carter

GP Dr Ken McCroary says patients without concession cards are still suffering. GP bulk-billing has bounced back by 2.1% in the two months since the Federal Government tripled bulk-billing incentives, the Minister for Health and Aged Care says. Mark Butler released statistics on Thursday showing that the bulk-billing rate for GP services rose from 75.6% in October to 77.7% in December.

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## Patients put off GP visits despite bulk billing boost

In Daily, Other, 01/02/2024, Isabella Kelly

Patients are increasingly holding off on seeing a GP due to the cost of appointments despite more clinics offering bulk billing, according to a new Productivity Commission report. As government data from November showed a 2.1 percentage point rise in the national GP bulk billing rate, a Productivity Commission report revealed the number of people delaying an appointment or not attending at all due to price had doubled. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the extra financial incentives were making a difference for clinics and patients.

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## Medicare reform: 'Never waste a crisis'

The Medical Republic, Other, 01/02/2024, Laura Woodrow

Seizing opportunities for reform whenever they appear will be key to the next 40 years. Despite the crises gripping the now middle-aged Medicare framework, positive opportunities for reform are everywhere, according to experts speaking at the system's 40 "birthday party" at Deakin University today. [...] On a day dominated by the self-described "jingoistic" opening address from federal Health Minister Mark Butler and the release of the latest bulk-billing numbers, another academic emphasised that all was not sunshine and happiness for Medicare.

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## Bulk billing rises, but still below pre-pandemic level

The Medical Republic, Other, 01/02/2024, Holly Payne

The tripled bulk billing incentive is making a difference, especially in rural and regional Australia. Data released to coincide with Medicare's 40th birthday today reveals a 2.1 percentage point uptick in bulk billing in the two months immediately following the introduction of tripled bulk billing incentives. [...]

Source: Office of Mark Butler, Minister for Health and Aged Care It's a small increase, but an uncharacteristically large one to have taken place over just two months, considering bulk billing rates have historically tended to vary by less than 1% each year.

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## Are you holding off visiting the GP due to the cost? You're not alone

Starts at 60, Other, 01/02/2024, Matthew Hart

The latest data from the Australian government has revealed a paradox in healthcare trends – while the national GP bulk billing rate has seen a positive uptick, more patients are holding off on medical appointments due to financial concerns. A Productivity Commission report highlighted a concerning doubling of the number of individuals delaying or completely forgoing appointments, citing the cost as a primary deterrent. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler highlighted the positive impact of the financial incentives, especially for clinics and patients.

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## Medicare: \$15m in bulk bill savings for Aussies under 'game changing' cost-of-living incentive

Yahoo! Finance Australia, Other, 01/02/2024, Belinda Grant-Geary

Out-of-pocket expenses for visiting the doctor have dropped under a new government incentive. Australians needing to see a doctor have saved an estimated \$15 million in out-of-pocket expenses since the government tripled a Medicare bulk-billing incentive. [...] Medicare bulk-billing incentives have been described as "game changing" by Health Minister Mark Butler.

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## ABC News, ABC News Afternoons, 01/02/2024, Ros Childs

The Australian Institute of Sport has released new recommendations for handling concussions, with growing concern about the potential health impacts for athletes playing youth and community sports. The Australian Institute of Sport is recommending a minimum stand-down period of 21 days following a concussion for anyone under the age of 19, or anyone playing a community sport. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler also weighed in on those new recommendations, saying just how important it was to keep the kids safe while they're playing sports.

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## ABC News, ABC News Afternoons, 01/02/2024, Ros Childs

The Federal Government says it's moved to triple the incentive paid to GPs who bulk bill certain patients is paying off. New figures show an extra 360,000 trips to doctors were fully covered by Medicare since funding was boosted in November, but many patients are still struggling to see a doctor. Health Minister Mark Butler says those numbers apply to GP visits. He also says those figures were even higher in areas with previously low rates, with disadvantaged aged and regional areas seeing some of the highest rates.

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## Channel 7, Seven Morning News, 01/02/2024, Ann Sanders

The Australian Institute of Sport wants to reform concussion protocols, especially for children. The new rules would see kids benched for 21 days if they're concussed while playing. Health Minister Mark Butler says having concussion officers at those sporting clubs that make sure that the kid or the adult playing community sport is followed up with their doctor as well as the 21-day time out period, is a welcome advance.

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## Channel 9, National Nine Morning News, 01/02/2024, Sophie Walsh

Australia is celebrating a major milestone in its health history today marking the 40th anniversary of Medicare. In line with the date, the Federal Government has released new data revealing the national bulk billing rate has risen by more than 2% to 77.7%. Health Minister Mark Butler says GPs were saying bulk billing could become a thing of the past if something wasn't done and data they have had since the Budget shows that they have managed to stop that slide.

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## Channel 9, Today, 01/02/2024, Karl Stefanovic and Sarah Abo

Interview with Mark Butler, Health Minister, regarding new protocols to protect kids and grassroots players from brain damage. Butler says it follows a landmark report from the Senate last year and it's going to give real confidence to parents. He adds the 21-day time out and the concussion officers that can follow up and make sure that the kids or the adults in community sports are being followed up by their doctor or by other medical experts is a really good piece of advice from the Institute of Sport.

*Interview continues on: [Channel 9 \(Sydney\)](#).*

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## Seven Orange, Seven Local News, 01/02/2024, Madelaine Collignon

GP Dr Carl Henman has expressed his frustration over comments made by Health Minister Mark Butler telling people to ring around to find a doctor. Henman says it's an insult to GPs, especially those in regional areas, who are already struggling to keep up with the demand of patients.

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## Sky News Live, Afternoon Agenda, 01/02/2024, Tom Connell and Ashleigh Gillon

Health Minister Mark Butler says he believes Australians won't be disappointed with the government's COVID inquiry, even if it isn't a Royal Commission. According to Butler, the stuff that was initiated by state governments including the broad lockdown arrangements, and density requirements are going to be considered deeply by the inquiry. Butler says they want it to be a sober, expert process and they don't want it to be a witch hunt or a bit of a show.

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## Sky News Live, Newsday, 01/02/2024, Kieran Gilbert

Interview with Mark Butler, Health Minister, regarding the 40 years of Medicare. PM Albanese has credited Medicare as the reason Australia has one of the best health systems in the world. Butler says when they came to government bulk billing for GP visits was in free fall and it was accelerating. He adds they were being told by doctors groups if something's not done, bulk billing runs the risk of becoming a piece of history rather than the core beating heart of Medicare. Butler says what they saw since the May Budget announcement is that slides started to stop.

*Interview continues on: [Sky News Live \(Sydney\)](#).*

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## 2GB, 23:00 News, 01/02/2024

The federal government is welcoming data showing an increase in the bulk billing rate, but acknowledges more work is needed to strengthen Australian healthcare. There's been a 2% uptick in the number of free GP appointments since new incentives for doctors kicked in late last year. Rural and regional areas have seen the greatest change Health Minister Mark Butler says it's a good start, but the medical system is still dealing with flow on effects from the pandemic.

*Also reported by: [6PR \(Perth\)](#).*

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## 4BC, 12:00 News, 01/02/2024

The Albanese Government says there has been a 2% increase in the number of doctor appointments

fully covered by Medicare since increasing incentives for GPs to bulk bill. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says there has been a turnaround following the first few months of the funding. Federal Shadow Health Minister Anne Ruston states other issues in the medical system haven't been addressed.

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## **4BC, 09:00 News, 01/02/2024**

The Australian Institute of Sport and 30 national sporting bodies have agreed to implement new concussion protocols to sideline children and adults for at least 21 days. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says more work can be done on the measures.

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## **ABC Radio Brisbane, 14:00 News, 01/02/2024**

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says it's becoming easier to find a bulk-billing doctor, but more needs to be done. New figures show a 2.1% increase in bulk billing since the Government tripled financial incentives for doctors.

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## **ABC Radio Brisbane, 07:00 News, 01/02/2024**

Data shows regional areas have recorded the highest rise in bulk-billed GP appointments since the tripling of Medicare incentives in November by the Federal Government. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler states figures in areas with previously low rates such as Tasmania are even higher. The Consumers Health Forum says those not qualified for the scheme are seeing costly fees.

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## **MINISTER WELLS**

### **21-days off after head knock in kids' sport**

West Australian, General News, 02/02/2024, Glen Quartermain and Rebecca Parish, Page 4

Western Australia's peak sports industry body has welcomed revolutionary changes to national concussion guidelines at the community level. The Australian Institute of Sport and Sports Medicine Australia on Thursday released a 62-page report and urged sporting bodies to fall in line with a recommended 21-day rest period from concussion. [...] WA Minister for Sport and Recreation David Templeman will meet with the Federal Sports Minister Anika Wells later this month to discuss the recommendations.

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## **ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE**

### **Triple M Central Coast, 10:00 News, 01/02/2024**

PM Anthony Albanese is set to tour the Peninsula Urgent Care Clinic with Assistant Minister Emma McBride and Robertson MP Gordon Reid.

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## **ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY**

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## CORONAVIRUS

### Covid inquiry can't calculate 'human cost'

Herald Sun, General News, 02/02/2024, Courtney Gould, Page 5

Australia's human rights watchdog has warned Labor's inquiry into the Covid-19 response is "not sufficient" enough to calculate the "full human cost of the pandemic". The inquiry was criticised when it was announced last September for not having the same powers as a royal commission and excluding the decisions made solely by the states from its scope.

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

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### 'Worst ever public health failing'

Ballarat Courier, General News, 02/02/2024, Page 3

Australia's covid-19 pandemic response has been slammed as the "worst ever public health failing" as doctors call for a royal commission into the nation's handling of the crisis. Labor went into the 2022 election promising a royal commission on the COVID-19 years, but in September it drew fierce criticism when the government instead announced a special commission of inquiry.

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

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### COVID-19 inquiry 'not sufficient': rights watchdog

Canberra Times, Other, 01/02/2024, Kat Wong

From social-distancing and 11am press conferences, to thermometer guns and border closures, if Australia wants to learn from the pandemic, the government should hold a royal commission, the human rights watchdog says. Labor went into the 2022 election promising a royal commission on the COVID-19 years, but in September it drew fierce criticism when the government instead announced a special commission of inquiry.

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### South Australia State Government employer ordered to pay compensation to public servant for Covid-19 vaccine injury

NEWS.com.au, Other, 01/02/2024, Jack Evans

In a landmark ruling, a state government employer will pay weekly compensation and medical bills of an Adelaide public servant who developed a heart condition from a reaction to the Covid-19 vaccine. Daniel Shepherd, 44, developed pericarditis due to a rare reaction to his third dose of Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine.

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## Has Australia's latest COVID wave reached its peak? Here's what we know

SBS, Other, 01/02/2024, Svetlana Printcev

Australia experienced a spike in COVID-19 infections, driven by the JN.1 variant, that appears to be declining. Here's how much longer experts predict the wave will continue. Numbers of COVID-19 cases in five states have fallen from recent highs, an expert said. The majority of recent cases have been the JN.1 variant, which has become dominant in Australia and overseas. Experts have reminded people to be up to date on their vaccinations.

[Read More](#)

## Rapid Antigen Test shortage easing in Tas

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 01/02/2024

After the Pharmacy Guild in Tasmania earlier this month sounded the alarm over a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) shortage in pharmacies across the state, Aussie Pharma Direct this week announced it had sent a fresh shipment of the tests and other personal protection equipment to its Hobart warehouse, reported Mercury.

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

### No place like home

Money Magazine, General News, 01/02/2024, Susan Hely, Page 60

Government care packages are booming and private providers are entering the market in droves. Here's how to age in your home in 2024. My mother, Rosemary, had a mantra in her old age. "I never want to leave my home and go into aged care." She wasn't alone. Around 80% of Australians want to be at home for as long as possible as they grow older.

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### New members appointed

The Senior - NSW, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 3

Nine new members have been appointed to the National Aged Care Advisory Council, all with extensive experience of the issues faced by older Australians. The new members, who began last month, are: Annie Butler, federal secretary of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Association; Lloyd Williams, national secretary of the Health Services Union; Carolyn Smith, aged care director of the United Workers Union; Pat Sparrow, chief executive COTA Australia; Tom Symondson, chief executive Aged Care and Community Providers Association; Carlo Carli, chair of the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia; Jenny Dodd, chief executive TAFE Directors Australia; Simon Miller, chief executive Anglicare; Cathy Thomas, group executive of Aged Care and Community Services, BlueCare.

Also reported by: [The Senior - WA \(Perth\)](#), [The Senior - SA \(Adelaide\)](#), [The Senior - QLD \(Brisbane\)](#), [The Senior - VIC \(Melbourne\)](#), [The Senior - TAS \(Hobart\)](#).

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### Medically unfit to drive?

The Senior - NSW, General News, 01/02/2024, Eileen Wood, Page 5

You've driven for 60-plus years, have a clean licence and absolutely rely on your car to go shopping, to medical appointments and to visit family and friends. Then you hear those soul destroying words from your GP or specialist. "You are not medically fit to drive." This happens to many older Australians every day and those few words can be devastating.

Also reported by: [The Senior - VIC \(Melbourne\)](#), [The Senior - WA \(Perth\)](#), [The Senior - SA \(Adelaide\)](#), [The Senior - QLD \(Brisbane\)](#).

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## Dementia without drugs

The Senior - TAS, General News, 01/02/2024, Libby Bingham, Page 6

Understanding the person living with dementia is the "first and fundamental step" in managing their care. It's also key to addressing the overuse of medication. [...] The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety report in 2021 identified overuse of psychotropic medication as a significant problem.

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## Advocates' key issues with new act

The Senior - NSW, General News, 01/02/2024, Rowan Cowley, Page 7

An independent complaints commissioner and clear obligations for care providers to uphold rights are among the key changes advocates want made to the new Aged Care Act. The exposure draft of the federal government act, which aims to place care recipients at its centre, is open for public submissions until February 16.

Also reported by: [The Senior - VIC \(Melbourne\)](#), [The Senior - WA \(Perth\)](#), [The Senior - QLD \(Brisbane\)](#).

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

## Push for rebate relief

The Senior - NSW, General News, 01/02/2024, Rowan Cowley, Page 15

An advocacy body is calling for an inquiry into council rate rebates for NSW pensioners as older Australians struggle with the cost of living. Rebates of up to 50 per cent were legislated under the Local Government Act in 1993, capped at \$250 per homeowner. Rates have soared in the ensuing years, but the cap remains fixed at \$250. Water and sewage rates have also remained capped at \$87.50 each.

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## Inclusion is a human right

The Senior - NSW, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 19

Imagine being in your 80s and being told "you are not medically fit to drive". It's tough when someone has been driving for 60-plus years, they are fiercely independent with a clean driving record and totally rely on their car to get around to shops and the myriad appointments which come with older age.

Also reported by: [The Senior - VIC \(Melbourne\)](#), [The Senior - QLD \(Brisbane\)](#).

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## Visitors lift senior spirits in Balwyn

The Senior - VIC, General News, 01/02/2024, Rowan Cowley, Page 20

Apart from her twice weekly visits to Balwyn Evergreen Centre, 82-year-old Jill Butler doesn't spend much time in the company of others. That is all set to change, with the centre signing on to take part in the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme. The federal government scheme aims to reduce social isolation by connecting older Australians with trained volunteers, providing connection and support.

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## More choices for baby boomers

The Senior - SA, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 29

It's official: the baby-boomer generation will soon be eligible for aged care. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the number of older Australians aged 65-plus has doubled from 2.1 to 4.2 million since 1995. As we are faced with one of the largest aging generations in history, the pressure on services to support older Australians will only intensify.

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## Catch up with latest info

The Senior - VIC, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 30

More than 80 exhibitors and a dozen experts in a range of subjects that impact older Australians will take part in the ACCPA Care and Ageing Well Expo presented by Mercy Health, in Melbourne on February 10-11. Visitors to the free expo at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre will be able to access equipment and advice from exhibitors, including those in residential care, home care,

retirement living, equipment and service providers, health care, legal and financial, medical, consultants, technology and support groups all under the one roof.

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## Tech-smart connections

The Senior - VIC, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 34

Once a cabbie, Alex Reid has always had the gift of the gab. Now the soon-to-be-centenarian is delighted to have five generations of family at the touch of a button through his Dossy video-calling app on his iPad, so there's always someone to talk to. "I just love a good chat and a laugh," he said.

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## How does super affect aged care?

The Senior - NSW, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 40

Making decisions around moving into residential aged care can be overwhelming. There is a lot to consider, starting with which facility has the best care available, the best location, and the level of care required. Then there are the financial details. How will the accommodation be paid for, what government subsidies are available, how does the payment system work, how will moving into care affect a person's income stream, and how will it impact their assets?

Also reported by: [The Senior - VIC \(Melbourne\)](#), [The Senior - QLD \(Brisbane\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#).

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## Where it's all go, go, go at Indigo

The Senior - NSW, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 41

The phone lines are always open at Indigo Solutions for the geat2GO program. A federal government initiative, geat2GO is a funding source for people eligible for the Commonwealth Home Support Program. It offers older people access to up to \$1000 worth of helpful devices and equipment each year (price can include health professional services), to help people maintain or increase their independence.

Also reported by: [The Senior - SA \(Adelaide\)](#), [The Senior - VIC \(Melbourne\)](#).

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## Planning early for peace of mind

The Senior - NSW, General News, 01/02/2024, Therese Murray, Page 44

Many older Australians report a desire to "age in place" and most of us have heard the term - but what does it actually mean? The definition of ageing in place is simply to remain in your own home as you get older and your health needs change. But seniors don't always need to stay in the home they own.

Also reported by: [The Senior - VIC \(Melbourne\)](#), [The Senior - SA \(Adelaide\)](#).

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## \$300m facility on the city's horizon

The Senior - NSW, General News, 01/02/2024, Therese Murray, Page 50

A \$300 million seniors' housing development will rise from the former TAFE campus at Charlestown, delivering 120 residential aged care beds, hundreds of new independent living units and assisted living services. Uniting director of property and housing Simon Furness said demand for retirement living options is increasing rapidly.

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## Building strong community connections

The Senior - VIC, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 52

City of Kingston's ongoing commitment to aged care has been strengthened through the launch of AccessCare's Social Links service. Focused on helping older people build stronger social connections, the service matches AccessCare clients with volunteers who help them participate in community activities. Kingston Mayor Jenna Davey-Burns said Social Links is helping people re-engage in the community.

## New study finds gamified exercises prevents falls in older people

Aged Care Insite, Other, 01/02/2024, Arshmah Jamal

A new study by Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA) found that at-home gamified step exercises effectively prevented falls in people over 65. The research asked participants to do smart±step – an exercise gaming system developed by NeuRA – for 120 minutes per week over a year.

[Read More](#)

## Health and Wellness – The power of exercise in maintaining best health

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 01/02/2024

Exercise and physical activity are well established as key factors in maintaining health and wellness for all age groups. The key goals might vary – while in our fifties the main goal is keeping up good health and mobility, staying active and preventing chronic diseases, as we get older we must set in appropriate principles for best health and wellness including muscle strength and bone mass, but also to exercise to keep up our quality of life, maintain independence and avoid falls.

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## POPULATION HEALTH

### Alert on pregnant drinkers

The Australian, Edition Changes - All-round Metro, 02/02/2024, Natasha Bitá, Page 1

Children of mothers who drank during pregnancy are driving the increase in learning difficulties in schools as well as youth crime, says Queensland's new Minister for Education, Di Farmer. She said a good education "starts with conception" and too many children were dropping out of school because of dysfunctional home lives and undiagnosed disabilities.

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### School curriculum warning over diet trigger words

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 02/02/2024, Henrietta Cook, Page 5

Teachers have been warned against asking students to calculate their body mass index (BMI) and using the terms "good" and "bad" to describe food under a curriculum overhaul aimed at preventing eating disorders. Hundreds of references to BMI, weight, calories, diet and the word "healthier" have also been removed from school resources and replaced with terms such as "balanced nutrition" by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

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

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### The next status symbol? Immortality

The Australian, Other, 01/02/2024, Elle Halliwell

We once simply wanted answers to the question of how to stay healthier, longer. But as technology gives us more insights into our bodies' inner workings, the new question is how can we live forever? If you were given a box containing the exact date of your death, would you open it? It's this question author Nikki Erlick explores in her 2022 novel *The Measure*, in which every adult on Earth receives a chest containing a piece of string indicating the length of time they have left to live.

[Read More](#)

### High-tech gadgets putting health in our hands

The Australian, Other, 01/02/2024, Jody Scott

Wearable tech offers the ultimate in digital navel gazing. But the health data we gather about ourselves has the potential to do much more than we realise. Ask a centenarian for their longevity secret and it's doubtful they will mention their daily step count. Nor are those famously long-living Blue Zone inhabitants likely to wax lyrical about sleep stats. But for many of us, wearable technology has become

an essential tool in our self-care kit, giving us real-time insights into our habits and feedback on where there is room for improvement or cause for concern.

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## Young Australians are drinking less alcohol but some are trying 'California sober'

SBS, Other, 01/02/2024, Madeleine Wedesweiler

Many young Australians are quitting or cutting back on alcohol, but not all of them are giving up on drugs. Some are calling it 'sober lite'. [...] 'Long-term risky drinking,' defined as more than four Australian standard drinks per day or 10 a week, increased most amongst 40-65 year olds between 2000 and 2019, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's 2019 National Drug Strategy Household Survey.

[Read More](#)

## Meals just the tip of the iceberg

Medical Forum, Other, 01/02/2024

Two new studies examining the impact of Australia's cost of living crisis show the health impacts of people trying to make ends meet. A survey of more than 1,200 Tasmanians by researchers from Flinders University found it was not just food that families were cutting back on and have called for government investment in social safety nets, nutrition programs and ensuring access to food.

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# CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

## Doch's new lease on life

Herald Sun, General News, 02/02/2024, Robyn Riley, Page 1

A month out from the new AFL season Carlton star Sam Docherty has opened up about his plans for the future, on and off the field. Almost four years on from his shock testicular cancer diagnosis, the universally liked Docherty says his focus is firmly on fatherhood, family and footy.

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## Saving their skins

Herald Sun, General News, 02/02/2024, Robyn Riley, Page 13

Having grown up in Melbourne's northeast, Leonie Fitzgerald says she knows only too well the dangers of sun exposure. There were summers of hot, humid days and scorching UV rays. [...] SunSmart is jointly funded by Cancer Council Victoria and the Victorian government and one of the longest running skin cancer prevention and early detection programs in the world.

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## Luisa leads campaign

Shepparton News, General News, 02/02/2024, Kelly Carmody, Page 3

Murchison local Luisa Niglia, 54, has joined forces with three ovarian cancer survivors in a fashion campaign that warns women not to dismiss early symptoms of the deadly disease. Throughout February and coinciding with Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, the new campaign can be seen across fashion retailer Black Pepper's 80 stores. The partnership hopes to raise awareness and much-needed funds for Ovarian Cancer Australia and will assist nurses who work closely with patients throughout diagnosis, treatment and beyond.

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

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## Three-year-old Rockhampton boy forced to wait nearly two years for speech therapy amid clinician shortage



For Hayley Battisson, the wait for her son's first day of kindergarten was nerve-racking. Nate, who turns four in April, has struggled to speak and communicate with his family. "By even three years old, he was only saying a couple of words," she said. "I thought maybe if I put him in kindy around all the other kids it might help him with this speech ... but that's not the case."

[Read More](#)

## How do we stop tanning culture?

ABC Online, Other, 01/02/2024

While many may welcome the warmer temperatures this weekend – how many of us are aware of the very real risks that come with tanning? Are we seeing a new generation of tan loving teens and what is the best way to educate them about just how dangerous a tan can be?

[Read More](#)

## The gift that gives life: With thousands of babies born with congenital heart disease every year, here's why your support on Sweethearts Day can make all the difference

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 01/02/2024, Sarah Fitzmaurice

With Valentine's Day right around the corner you may well be looking for inspiration on what to gift your loved one this year. But instead of buying something just for the sake of the day, why not give a gift that helps give life and one that lasts a lifetime? HeartKids provides invaluable help and support to babies, children and families facing congenital heart defects and the 14th of February is a significant day for the charity.

[Read More](#)

## A breakthrough that is very personal – CheckMate 76K

Medical Forum, Other, 01/02/2024

There is a strong back-story to the popular joint win in this year's Australian of the Year award. Professor Georgina Long and Professor Richard Scolyer's enduring partnership has saved thousands of lives from melanoma, known as Australia's national cancer.

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## PRIMARY CARE

### ALP lashed for 'celebrating' dire ambulance response times

The Australian, General News, 02/02/2024, James Dowling, Page 7

The Malinauskas government has been accused of "celebrating" shocking findings that ambulances in South Australia take nearly an hour to arrive at an emergency, with industry bodies and the state opposition calling for more to be done to improve response times. The Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services 2022-23 found ambulances arrived at the scene of 90 per cent of triple-zero calls within 55.6 minutes, a figure that Labor has touted as a significant drop from the 71.3 minute waits a year prior.

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

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### Excluding children 'abhorrent': Exit

Canberra Times, General News, 02/02/2024, Lucy Bladen, Page 9

The exclusion of children from the ACT's proposed voluntary assisted dying laws had been criticised as "abhorrent" discrimination by Exit International. Exit ACT chapter lead David Swanton told an inquiry a parent or guardian should be able to make a decision about a terminally ill child in the same way they can make other health decisions.

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

## Flagship system off sick

Northern Territory News, General News, 02/02/2024, Alex Treacy, Page 3

NT Health has formally suspended the use of its flagship \$259m integrated electronic health records system, Acacia, in the Territory's two busiest emergency departments. The call was made because the system was causing "significant obstacles" for clinicians in the fast-paced environment. Acacia, dubbed by the NT Government the biggest such project ever attempted in the Territory, entered use in the Royal Darwin and Palmerston Regional hospitals late last year.

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

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## Hospital's \$7.9m boost

Northern Territory News, General News, 02/02/2024, Harry Brill, Page 24

A new "state-of-the-art" operating theatre will be added to Alice Springs Hospital, Health Minister Selena Uibo has confirmed. Valued at \$7.9 million, works on the hybrid operating theatre will commence this month and are expected to be completed by the end of the year. The announcement follows revelations this week that Territorian wait times for non-urgent elective surgery were among the worst in the nation, with median wait times exceeding more than a year for some hospitals.

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## Mobile paramedics used as 'clock-stoppers'

Ballarat Courier, General News, 02/02/2024, Callum Godde, Page 4

Victoria's mobile ambulance service is set for a shake-up following the death of a regionally based paramedic and dispatch concerns. A new operating model for Mobile Intensive Care Ambulances (MICA) is under consideration, Ambulance Victoria has confirmed. It is believed some of the mobile service's single responders, who are based in regional areas such as Ballarat, Bendigo, Morwell and Horsham, could be converted into dual units.

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## Clinic celebrates first year

Border Watch, General News, 02/02/2024, Melanie Riley, Page 9

The Women's Health Clinic @ Hawkins Medical celebrated their one year of operation recently. Practice manager Judith Williams said the clinic staff were excited to reach the one year mark. "We have put in a lot of work and there's been some really positive things that have come out of it," she said. Ms Williams said the clinic has seen patients presenting from not only the Limestone Coast, but from as far away as Quorn.

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## Dive into VAD numbers

Border Watch, General News, 02/02/2024, Page 14

This week marks the first anniversary of Voluntary Assisted Dying commencing across the state. The legislation provides eligible members of the community greater choice at the end of their life. Within the first year of operation in South Australia, 195 people were issued with a voluntary assisted dying permit by the Department for Health and Wellbeing.

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## Pensioner's fury at MRI scan fee

Newcastle Herald, General News, 02/02/2024, Damon Cronshaw, Page 4

Wallsend pensioner Sue - Morrison felt a strong sense of injustice when she had to - pay \$365 for an MRI. A GP sent her for an MRI - after an ultrasound found a 4-centimetre mass in her e thigh muscle. I The GP and Mrs Morrison , were concerned the mass - could be cancerous. n "I went to the doctor beh cause I had pain in the top of my thigh that was radiating - right down to my leg and d foot," Mrs Morrison, 70, said.

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## Life saving defibs for VIC trains

The Senior - VIC, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 15

Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) are being installed on V/Line trains. Ninety AEDs have been installed including 65 on VLocity trains - with many more to be progressively rolled out over the coming months. Defibrillators on trains will help ensure critical assistance can be given to a person on board in the vital first few minutes after a cardiac arrest.

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## Vulnerable to have say on right to die

The Senior - VIC, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 21

Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) is now legal in most parts of Australia, but should it be available to people living with dementia? A new research project aims to assess people with dementia's attitudes, needs and preferences following the decision to legalise VAD in NSW. Charles Sturt University PhD candidate Adrienne Matthys said while VAD is now legal in NSW, Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and the ACT - it is not generally offered to people with dementia.

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

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## Feel like your emergency department visit lasted forever? You are not alone

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 01/02/2024, Hamish Hastie

Patients in Western Australia's emergency departments continue to experience some of the longest wait times in the country as public hospitals continue to struggle to get out of their post-COVID funk. Public hospital and ambulance data, compiled by the Productivity Commission, revealed wait times for urgent and semi-urgent patients in WA EDs were some of the worst in the country.

[Read More](#)

## More than 100 people die in first year of South Australia's voluntary assisted dying program

Adelaide Now, Other, 01/02/2024, Kathryn Bermingham

On the first anniversary of South Australia's Voluntary Assisted Dying program, the state government has given an update on how many people it has helped. More than 100 people have died following administration of Voluntary Assisted Dying medication in the first year of the scheme's operation in South Australia.

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

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## Tasmanians tell their stories about the state's ailing healthcare system

ABC Online, Other, 01/02/2024, Adam Langenberg

Even with Tasmania's health system constantly in the headlines for negative reasons, people are often guarded about sharing their personal experiences of seeking medical care. But when the ABC asked for people's stories in a Facebook post, we were flooded with comments and messages — both positive and negative — about getting an ambulance, or being treated in the four major hospitals

[Read More](#)

## How do you solve a problem like rural healthcare in NSW?

The Mandarin, Other, 01/02/2024, Dan Holmes

Delivery of health services in the bush has been one of the most wicked problems Australian governments have battled with in the past few decades. Australia's sparse population has made delivering the same health services in the rural, regional and remote areas all but impossible for generations now.

[Read More](#)

## NSW dental woes

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data analysis revealed that New South Wales' teeth ranks among Australia's least healthy, with the fourth-highest rate of decayed, missing, and filled teeth per person, and the second-highest rates of untreated decay among residents.

[Read More](#)

## Channel 10, 10 News First, 01/02/2024, Kate Freebairn

More than 100 people have ended their lives since terminal patients were given access to voluntary assisted dying in SA a year ago. Amid praise for the program, there are united calls to extend the service by allowing doctors to consult regional patients on euthanasia over the phone.

[Play Now](#)

## Sky News Live, Afternoon Agenda, 01/02/2024, Tom Connell and Ashleigh Gillon

Victoria's Health Department is investigating allegations that staff and family members linked to Colac Area Health purported to be patients during a visit to an urgent care clinic by Vic Health Minister Mary-Anne Thomas last August. Thomas says if those allegations prove to be true, it is a very significant breach of trust that has been perpetrated by, um some in the health service.

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# MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

## Jail violence 'fuelled by failures' in mental care

Age, General News, 02/02/2024, Nick McKenzie, Page 1

Security gaps, under-resourcing and patchwork governance in mental health care across Victoria's justice system is fuelling violence and aggression in the state's jails and placing staff and inmates at risk of serious harm. The damning findings are detailed in a series of confidential reports compiled by the state's workplace safety watchdog, leaked to The Age, which describe multiple failings within the Victorian Institute of Forensic Mental Health.

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## Woman died as ambo is delayed

Courier Mail, General News, 02/02/2024, Stephanie Bennett, Page 7

It took more than four hours for paramedics and police to attend the home of a distressed, suicidal woman who called triple-0 for help and when they did she was already dead. Right to Information documents obtained by The Courier-Mail of a significant incident review conducted by the Queensland Ambulance Service into the Gold Coast incident in July last year reveal the woman called triple-0 at 12.43am to say she was "suicidal and actively cutting herself".

Also reported by: [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#).

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## How one phone call saved Scott's life

Newcastle Herald, General News, 02/02/2024, Brianna Hedges, Page 65

Scott Liddell was five minutes from ending his life when he received a phone call from a friend asking how he was doing. Since that day in 2015, Mr Liddell has made it his mission to provide a listening ear to his community, working as a pastoral carer and mentor for support network Mentoring Men.

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

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## Remembering Sean together

Shepparton News, General News, 01/02/2024, Jay Bryce, Page 4

On Saturday morning, January 20, more than 50 people arrived at Shepparton gym Nemesis Strength and Conditioning to participate in a workout honouring one of their own. The gym partnered with local businesses, such as Shepparton BMW, to provide prizes for the event and also featured the Jam Packed coffee van on-site for attendees. They raised more than \$7500 for mental health support organisation Beyond Blue.

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## Nature's healing Hans

The Senior - VIC, General News, 01/02/2024, Rowan Cowley, Page 18

A MEN'S health group is helping blokes who are doing it tough get back on the road to wellness by taking a detour off the beaten track. Statistics show that as a group, men do it toughest when it comes to mental health challenges. One in eight men will experience depression in their lifetimes and according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, about 75 per cent of people who committed suicide in the country last year were men.

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## Kimberley's youth to receive specialised addiction service post-redesign

West Australian, Other, 01/02/2024, Cain Andrews

The Mental Health Commission has reiterated its commitment to establishing a dedicated addiction service for youth in the Kimberley despite not specifying when it might open its doors. In the 2019-20 budget, the WA Government allocated \$9.2 million over three years for the design and commission of an alcohol and other drugs service for young people in the Kimberley.

[Read More](#)

## Prevention better than cure for kids' mental wellbeing in regional WA

Kalgoorlie Miner, Other, 01/02/2024, Claudette Rizzi

Zero2Hero charity is raising funds for research and community awareness around youth mental health. Its goal is to help prevent mental health issues in young people and assist them to maintain wellness into adulthood. Beyond Blue research shows that three in four mental illnesses form before the age of 25. Despite this, more than 95 per cent of mental health funding goes towards treatment, with only a meagre 1.7 per cent going towards prevention.

[Read More](#)

## 'This is disgusting': TikTok bans 'dangerous' legging legs trend

NEWS.com.au, Other, 01/02/2024, Natalie Brown

TikTok has cracked down on a "toxic" new trend after mass backlash from users over its perpetuation of unrealistic and damaging body standards. Hashtagged "legging legs", it consists of young girls declaring they don't have legs that look "good" in a pair of athletic tights. The trend, which first became popular late last year, perpetuates the idea that one singular body type and look is ideal – misinforming and potentially harming impressionable and vulnerable young minds.

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

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## CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

### Baby death rate shame

Courier Mail, General News, 02/02/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 1

The number of babies dying within a month of birth has almost doubled since 2018, the year the state's biggest review into maternity services was launched by then health minister Steven Miles. Shock new Productivity Commission data shows there were 720 perinatal deaths in the state in 2022 - a rate of 11.5 per 1000 - up massively from 488 in 2018, a rate of 7.8 deaths per 1000.

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

## Bendigo Health opens doors for 125 graduate nurses

Bendigo Advertiser, General News, 02/02/2024, Page 6

The newest batches of Bendigo Health nurses have begun their careers this week. More than 100 graduates have joined the organisation's workforce, and would rotate through areas such as emergency, aged care, midwifery, mental health and palliative care.

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

## Recruits from the UK, Ireland to boost nursing numbers

Newcastle Herald, General News, 02/02/2024, Damon Cronshaw, Page 4

More than 100 overseas registered nurses are set to start work in Hunter-New England, giving the district's public health sector a much-needed shot in the arm. The nurses were recruited from the United Kingdom and Ireland in an international recruitment effort that the Hunter health district led.

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

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## More nurses, midwives pushed for vaccine mandates

Canberra Times, Other, 01/02/2024, Kat Wong and Tess Ikonomou

Hundreds of nurses and midwives quit their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic due to vaccine mandates but many thousands more backed them, a parliamentary inquiry has been told. Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation federal secretary Annie Butler told a Senate committee on Thursday, hundreds of members rather than thousands, were stood aside due to their refusal of the COVID vaccine.

Also reported by: [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Newcastle\)](#).

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## HEALTH WORKFORCE

### Hospital still on hunt for new chief following resignation

Ballarat Courier, General News, 02/02/2024, Michelle Smith, Page 4

St John of God Ballarat is on the search for a new chief executive following the resignation of Alex Demidov last year. Despite Mr Demidov leaving his position in early October, the organisation was still advertising the vacancy last month almost three months later. St John of God director of nursing Maria Noonan is acting chief executive officer.

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### The doctor is in

Launceston Examiner, General News, 02/02/2024, Duncan Bailey, Page 1

Twelve new trainee general practitioners (GPs) began work across Tasmania on Thursday. The new GPs started under the state government's Single Employer Model Pilot, which was rolled out in September last year. The pilot is a partnership between the Tasmanian and Australian governments designed to make a rural GP career a "more attractive option."

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### Rural Clinical School of WA students arrive in Broome for placement

West Australian, Other, 01/02/2024, Cain Andrews

A new cohort of Rural Clinical School of WA students have arrived in Broome, with the 12 trainee doctors to work at Broome Hospital and clinics around town this year. The 10 penultimate and two final-year students in Broome are joined by 138 other students spread out over 15 different sites Statewide, including Derby and Kununurra.

[Read More](#)

## **‘People need to know that this goes on’: Doctor sent racist hate mail at work**

Australian Doctor, Other, 01/02/2024, Sarah Simpkins

Professor Rhea Liang posted the letter on social media so 'people know this goes on'. A high-profile surgeon has revealed the hate mail sent to her work from someone who claimed to be a GP following the Voice to Parliament referendum. Associate Professor Rhea Liang posted the letter on X, formerly Twitter, with the name on the letter censored.

[Read More](#)

## **‘What pharmacist activities do our colleagues perceive to be most valuable?’**

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 01/02/2024, Megan Haggan

A new study looking at how colleagues perceive hospital pharmacists has shone a light on their desire for specialised pharmacist roles. "Roles of hospital pharmacists should be strategically allocated, with a focus on unique tasks that harness pharmacists' clinical expertise," the study, published in the International Journal for Quality in Health Care, has found.

[Read More](#)

## **Let us work to scope: hospital pharmacists**

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 01/02/2024, Megan Haggan

Hospital pharmacists can help provide cost-effective health care by working to their full scope, they say in their pre-Budget submission The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia has outlined its blueprint for improving the efficiency and capacity of Australia's health care system, in its 2024-25 pre-Federal Budget Submission.

[Read More](#)

## **New surgeons' boss**

Medical Forum, Other, 01/02/2024

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons has appointed a new CEO, Dr Stephanie Clota, the former head of GPEx, a primary care specialist training and workforce planning organisation based in SA. Dr Clota, who started last month, faces an uphill battle with the college delivering a deficit result of \$10 million in 2022, compared to a deficit of \$0.

[Read More](#)

## **PDL student grants open**

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 01/02/2024

The Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL) announced that its 2024 Student Grant Program has opened for new applications. Established to help Australian pharmacy students broaden their education by attending a professional pharmacy conference, the grants program funds event registrations, travel and accommodation expenses up to the value of \$5,000 per person.

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# **TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS**

## **Medication costs rise**

The Senior - VIC, General News, 01/02/2024, Eileen Wood, Page 13

Australians needing vital medications will be doing it tougher this year as the cost of PBS medications rose from January 1, prompting outrage from the Pharmacy Guild of Australia. The maximum co-payment for PBS listed medicines went up by \$1.60 to \$31.60 for general patients and up by 40 cents to \$7.70 for concessional card holders.

Also reported by: [The Senior - QLD \(Brisbane\)](#), [The Senior - WA \(Perth\)](#).

## Substitution arrangement

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 01/02/2024

New SSSI arrangement approved for oral fluoxetine The Department of Health and Aged Care has announced it has made amendments to the National Health (Pharmaceutical Benefits) (Pharmacist Substitution of Medicines without Prescription during Shortages) Determination 2021 to allow pharmacists to supply different form of oral fluoxetine at equivalent dose.

[Read More](#)

## OmvoH fails to list, call for bold reform

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 01/02/2024

Pharma company Eli Lilly underscored the urgent need for reform of practices by the Health Technology Assessment (HTA) in Australia, impacting its inability to progress the PBS listing of OmvoH (mirikizumab) for the treatment of eligible adults with moderate-to-severe active ulcerative colitis.

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## MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

### End health care 'blame game': MPs

Hobart Mercury, General News, 02/02/2024, David Killick, Page 7

Federal Minister Julie Collins has called for an end to the health care blame game while hailing an increase in Medicare bulk billing in Tasmania. Celebrating Medicare's 40th anniversary on Thursday, Ms Collins said delivering the best results in health required all levels of government to co-operate. "We want to continue to work with the state government on solutions here in Tasmania," she said.

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

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

### Ageing Medicare needs 'major reno': AMA

Launceston Examiner, General News, 02/02/2024, Duncan Bailey, Page 3

February 1 marks 40 years since the bulk billing service, Medicare, was introduced in Australia. The historic and, at the time, controversial initiative brought on by the Hawke government in 1984 ensured basic health care for all Australians. So, how does it hold up today in Tasmania? Australian Medical Association Tasmanian branch president John Saul said the system was in "drastic need of modernisation."

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

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### Bulk-billed GP appointments rise

ABC Online, Other, 01/02/2024

Hundreds of thousands of extra doctor appointments bulk-billed since the Federal Government boosted incentives for GPs; The bosses of the world's biggest tech platforms accused of having 'blood on their hands' for failing to protect children from online exploitation;

[Read More](#)

### Department of Health set to address '10 years of reform in only 10 days' on February 2

Aged Care Guide, Other, 01/02/2024, David McManus

The Department of Health and Aged Care will address the fallout from COVID-19 emergency telehealth measures on Friday. The Department of Health and Aged Care will appear to examine the ANAO report No. [...] The Australian Digital Health Agency reported that 118.2 million telehealth services had



been delivered to 18 million patients and more than 95,000 practitioners had used telehealth services between March 13, 2020 – July 31, 2022.

[Read More](#)

## Combining technology and education for comprehensive cybersecurity in healthcare

Aged Care Insite, Other, 01/02/2024, Jason Whyte

The healthcare sector has embraced a range of digital technologies, from interconnected Internet of Things (IoT) devices to advanced telehealth services, all in the pursuit of enhanced patient care. While this has improved accessibility and efficiency, it has also significantly broadened the potential attack surface for cybercriminals. [...] According to the most recent Australian Digital Health Agency Cyber Security Report, the number of weekly cyberattacks in the healthcare industry increased by 69 per cent from 2021 to 2022.

[Read More](#)

## Medicare's mediocre milestone?

Medical Forum, Other, 01/02/2024

Medicare turned 40 this week, and like many Australians the same age, the system is showing signs of strain. It is struggling to cope with the soaring costs of healthcare within the wider context of global and national inflation – a fit for purpose mid-life crisis.

[Read More](#)

## ABC News, News Breakfast, 01/02/2024, Michael Rowland and Lisa Millar

Interview with Steve Robson, President, AMA, regarding data revealing around 360,000 more trips to the GP have been bulk billed since an incentive for doctors was tripled in November. The Federal Government has released the figures today because they're marking the 40th anniversary of Medicare. Robson says the information they are seeing is pleasing because, in several places around the country, particularly for vulnerable Australians, they have seen an uptick in bulk billing.

[Play Now](#)

## Radio National, Life Matters, 01/02/2024, Hilary Harper and Michael Mackenzie

GPs are urging the Federal Government to keep on providing extra funding for Medicare to boost bulk billing rates. Newly released data shows that bulk billed appointments for GPs increased by 2.1% in November and December. Royal Australian College of GPs President Dr Nicole Higgins says Medicare suffered ten years of neglect from successive governments.

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## BENEFITS INTEGRITY

### 'Fake patients' at minister's pic op

Age, Edition Changes - 2nd Edition, 02/02/2024, Rachel Eddie and Kieran Rooney, Page 1

The Health Department is investigating allegations that medical staff and their family members posed as patients for Health Minister Mary-Anne Thomas' visit to an urgent care clinic in Colac last year. Thomas visited Colac Area Health on August 9 to "see the positive impact of equipment upgrades on staff and patients" after the Victorian government invested \$221,500 in new heart-monitoring equipment, she said at the time.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Guardian \(Online\)](#).

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## Canberra doctor Dr Nathem Al-Naser deregistered after in appropriate behaviour

NEWS.com.au, Other, 01/02/2024, Carla Mascarenhas

A doctor who kissed a patient on the mouth, asked whether she used sex toys and told another her boyfriend was "lucky" has been deregistered for two years. Dr Nathem Al-Naser, who owns his own medical clinic in Belconnen in Canberra, was taken to the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal by the Medical Board of Australia after they received two complaints about him. [...] But it was a kiss on the mouth at the end of a routine appointment that sparked the complaint after the woman disclosed it to her psychologist who reported it to Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency.

[Read More](#)

## Dr Lisa Baynes admits to working after not renewing her registration

The Courier Mail, Other, 01/02/2024, Ashleigh Tullis and Aymon Bertah

A doctor has admitted to continuing to work in two major hospitals in Sydney's north after not renewing her medical practitioner registration, a court has heard. [...] Baynes admitted she practised as a senior resident medical officer at Royal North Shore Hospital for 33 days while she was unregistered despite her employment contract – which she signed – clearly stating she needed to maintain Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency registration.

[Read More](#)

## Sydney Harbour shark bite: NSW Ambulance apologises after staffer leaked photo of victim's injuries

The Guardian, Other, 01/02/2024, Natasha May

A New South Wales ambulance staff member is responsible for leaking an image of a shark bite victim's injuries from inside the hospital, the state's health department has revealed. NSW Ambulance said in a statement on Thursday afternoon that they have apologised to the family of Lauren O'Neill over the incident. "We believe a NSW Ambulance staff member was responsible for the breach of her privacy," a spokesperson said.

[Read More](#)

## Channel 10, 10 News First, 01/02/2024, Jennifer Keyte

The Colac hospital is being investigated by the Health Department over accusations it used employees to fill beds to make the emergency department appear busier when the Health Minister visited late last year. Opposition Leader John Pesutto is calling for an independent inquiry. But his colleague, who is the local MP, says the hospital has done nothing wrong.

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## HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

### Researcher helping to guide healthcare funding inquiry

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 02/02/2024, Natalie Croxon, Page 14

A Wollongong researcher with decades of experience will help guide an inquiry into healthcare funding in NSW and how to deliver better, more cost-effective services to the state's residents. Professor Kathy Eagar, an adjunct professor of health services research at the University of NSW, was invited to join a panel of experts that includes other academics, clinicians and healthcare leaders.

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### How does Australia's health system stack up internationally? Not bad, if you're willing to wait for it

Aged Care Inside, Other, 01/02/2024, Stephen Duckett

When things are going bad in the health system, we are reassured we've got one of the best health systems in the world. But we're rarely told where we actually stand relative to others. A new report from

the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) shows where Australia is doing relatively well – and not so well. The report is more than 200 pages with dozens of charts and tables.

[Read More](#)

## Bureaucracy framing its own pharmacy ‘policy’?

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 02/02/2024, Megan Haggan and Bruno Guerrero

It's 1984, and pharmacy is questioning the influence of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Remuneration Tribunal...and looking at the "new technology" of 8mm video The first Community Pharmacy Agreement – known as the Guild-Government Agreement – is still six years away, so it's up to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Remuneration Tribunal to decide on issues like dispensing fees.

[Read More](#)

## An 8CPA wish list, from consultants

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 01/02/2024, Megan Haggan

A model the Government is forgetting, focusing on the needs of the vulnerable, and casting a wider net outside pharmacy... what effects will the 8CPA have outside community pharmacy? With 8CPA discussions well underway, and various calls for the Agreement to be settled as quickly as possible, interest in what it will mean for the

[Read More](#)

## NIPVIP concerns are being heard

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 01/02/2024, Russell Smith

Decisions to address concerns around the funding of the NIPVIP program, and rules relating to off-site services are a matter for government, a Department official says Issues relating to fees paid to pharmacies under the new National Immunisation Program Vaccination in Pharmacy (NIPVIP) program and restrictions requiring shots to be administer in the pharmacy setting

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## SPORT

### Aussie charged over rugby abuse

The Australian, General News, 02/02/2024, Julian Linden, Page 3

World Rugby officials have vowed to track down and punish online trolls who abused referees at last year's World Cup after a Queensland man became the first alleged perpetrator worldwide to be formally charged. Reacting to the sickening increase in toxic attacks on referees, World Rugby officials have been silently working with hi-tech security partners to identify and report any anonymous trolls who posted online hate messages to match officials during the sport's showcase tournament.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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### Golfers tee off

Daily Telegraph, General News, 02/02/2024, James Morrow, Page 1

Teal MP Zali Steggall has been accused of "picking on golfers" after calling for a 100 year old public golf club to be closed and the land handed over to a nearby school. Balgowlah Golf Club, a public nine hole course celebrating its centenary this year, had sought a five year lease from Northern Beaches Council to give it some certainty after years of being threatened with demolition as part of the now shelved Northern Beaches Tunnel project.

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### Clarko bid rejected

Herald Sun, General News, 02/02/2024, Mark Robinson, Page 1

An attempt to have the Hawthorn racism scandal thrown out by the Human Rights Commission has

failed. It's understood lawyers for Hawthorn, and for two senior football staff Alastair Clarkson and Jason Burt petitioned to have the racism claims made by former players and their partners dismissed by the HRC.

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## Hockey plays it safe

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 02/02/2024, Daniel Renfrey, Page 23

One of South Australia's major sporting bodies will implement the Australian Institute of Sport's recommended concussion protocols and says the sporting community needs to take them seriously. Hockey SA chief Geoff Riddle said the state's clubs and players would follow the directive of Hockey Australia and medical professionals regarding recent AIS recommendations on concussion in community and youth sport.

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## Major sport codes 'carefully consider' new AIS advice

Canberra Times, Sport, 02/02/2024, Melanie Dinjaski, Page 67

Australia's major contact sport codes have responded to the revised concussion position statement from the Australian Institute of Sport released on Thursday. The updated 2024 Concussion Brain Health Position Statement includes new youth and community sport guidelines that are set to prompt plenty of discussion among the nation's sportings bodies, with increased stand-down periods suggested for concussions in children and adults in community sport.

*Also reported by: [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Sunraysia Daily \(Mildura\)](#), [Sunraysia Daily \(Mildura\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [SBS \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#).*

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## Liveris reveals his call to Miles

Courier Mail, General News, 02/02/2024, Stephanie Bennett, Page 6

Brisbane 2032 Games president Andrew Liveris was on the phone to Steven Miles even before he became Premier to urge him not to "dial back" the city's Olympic and Paralympic plans. Speaking on The CourierMail and Nova's podcast Toward the Games out today, Mr Liveris also revealed a "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunity Brisbane 2032 was offering, with three First Nations' students set to join the project team delivering the Games' emblems and brand strategy.

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## 'Gold medal maker' drops Olympic role

Courier Mail, General News, 02/02/2024, Kylie Lang, Page 6

Chelsea Warr, the internationally renowned sports official dubbed "the gold medal maker", has sensationally quit as the chief executive of the Queensland Academy of Sport. The development comes less than four years after Ms Warr was lured back from the UK to identify and develop the state's young stars for the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games.

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## Perfect pitch

Hobart Mercury, General News, 02/02/2024, Ryan Rosendale, Page 1

The future of Tasmanian soccer could be set for a major boost with Football Tasmania unveiling its plans for an \$80m hub in Hobart. The Mercury can exclusively reveal the first plans for the organisation's 'home of football' - an \$80m hub that would cater for both elite and community football and drive forward the state's push for men's and women's A-League sides.

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## Summer drowning toll in Australia heading to 100

West Australian, General News, 02/02/2024, Page 24

More than 100 people are likely to drown in Australia over summer, according to Royal Life Saving Australia which projected the tally after what its chief executive Justin Scarr described as "an

absolutely tragic" summer so far. There were 72 drownings in the two months of December and January, a 24 per cent increase from the previous summer, when 90 people drowned The increase in deaths over the past year had multiple causes that public policy ought to address, Mr Scarr said.

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

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## Roar deal: Tigers join campaign for change

Shepparton News, General News, 02/02/2024, Jay Bryce, Page 9

Kylie Ruggi is a member of one of the largest, if not the largest, junior basketball clubs in Shepparton, the Tigers. She has more than three decades of local basketball experience in coaching and playing and is tired of her players (and the rest of the younger basketball community) being held back by the facilities.

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## 'Horse mistreatment, race fixing' in harness industry

Shepparton News, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 16

Horses trained by a leading harness racing stables in Tasmania were physically and verbally abused with the aim of improving their performance, according to a scathing report. The independent review, called last year after the ABC aired allegations of poor industry practices, also found individuals in the sport engaged in team driving and race fixing.

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## Epic designs for our arena

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 02/02/2024, Tom Gillespie, Page 5

An \$18m expansion of the Clive Berghofer Arena would not only make it the home of multiple sports like basketball and squash but also bring major championships and act as training facilities for future Olympic teams. That's the dream for the St Mary's Old Boys Association, which is set to lodge an application with the Toowoomba Regional Council for a massive upgrade of the Herries Street facility, next door to the all-boys school.

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## Either play more women's Tests or none at all: Lanning

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 01/02/2024

Australian cricket legend Meg Lanning would prefer to see women's Test matches scrapped altogether than continue to have them scheduled sporadically. The longest format of the game is much rarer in the women's international arena than in the men's; only 12 Tests have been played worldwide across the last decade.

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## HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

### Fine-tuned chemotherapy one step closer

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 02/02/2024, Angus Dalton, Page 6

Australian scientists have grown copies of tumours from bowel cancer patients and, in a world first, blasted them with different chemotherapy drugs to determine which treatment works for each individual. The replicated tumours, called organoids, are the size of sand grains. Researchers grew the organoids from patient biopsies to closely replicate the molecular makeup and characteristics of each individual's cancer.

Also reported by: [Age \(Melbourne\)](#), [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#).

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## Beating jab fears is now child's play

A study aiming to prevent fear of vaccination among kids is recruiting Geelong and Surf Coast children. The Deakin University research uses special eye-tracking technology and is seeking to determine how play therapy can help kids cope. Bonnie Schram undertook play therapy sessions before and after her four-year-old vaccination last year as part of the study. Mum Kate Schram, of Highton, said coming into the immunisation, she had not been sure how her daughter would go.

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## Could funnel-webs help our hearts?

The Senior - QLD, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 11

Could the venom of the deadly funnel-web prove a potent weapon against heart attack and stroke? A team from University of Queensland has developed a drug containing spider venom molecule Hi1a, having previously shown the molecule protects cells from damage caused by the two major health events.

Also reported by: [The Senior - TAS \(Hobart\)](#)

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## New hope in bid to stop deadly cancer

The Senior - QLD, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 42

Women with a deadly form of cancer could soon have new hope thanks to a promising new therapy. Endometrial cancer has a poor prognosis if the cancer spreads or returns. But scientists from Queensland University of Technology have discovered a new therapy with the potential to inhibit growth of uterine tumour cells.

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## AI to ID unlikely cause of falls

The Senior - WA, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 25

Could a common indicator of vascular disease help identify those at higher risk of falls? An Edith Cowan University led research team believes the answer is yes, and has developed a tool to help detect it. A first of its kind study headed by Jack Dalla Via found women with a condition known as abdominal aortic calcification (AAC) had an increased risk of falls and fractures.

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## Proteomics takes forward step with blood test diagnosis

West Australian, Other, 01/02/2024, Doug Bright

Proteomics International Laboratories is showcasing its latest diagnostic milestones for endometriosis and oesophageal cancer in front of Australia and New Zealand's field-leading researchers at a symposium in Victoria. The company says its latest clinical results demonstrate "robust evidence" for the inclusion of its biomarker panels in its bid to produce breakthrough diagnostic blood tests for both of the severe conditions.

[Read More](#)

## Australia on the verge of major cancer breakthrough

NEWS.com.au, Other, 01/02/2024, Marion Saville

Australia is on track to be the first country in the world to eliminate cervical cancer as a public health concern. The latest figures show 6.5 per 100,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer in Australia each year, with an estimated 942 new cases of the disease and 222 deaths from it in 2022. In 2020, the World Health Organization announced a global strategy to accelerate elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem.

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## Legal aid crisis puts Aboriginal accused at risk

The Australian, General News, 02/02/2024, Ellie Dudley, Page 2

Aboriginal people accused of crimes in one of Australia's most remote and dangerous communities may be forced to indefinitely represent themselves in court following a mass exodus of staff from the country's largest Indigenous legal service, amid renewed calls for more transparency around federal government funding for the embattled organisation.

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

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## Inquiry into Indigenous prison rates

Canberra Times, General News, 02/02/2024, Jasper Lindell, Page 1

An independent review will examine the over-representation of First Nations people in the ACT's justice system, with the territory government finally set to announce the beginning of an inquiry. The ACT government will on Monday announce the appointment of an independent reviewer, almost three-and-a-half years after promising the review, The Canberra Times understands.

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## Prison death 'avoidable', say family

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 02/02/2024, Page 54

The family of a mentally ill Aboriginal man who took his own life in a prison cell say his death could have been avoided with appropriate care. Timothy Garner died while he was being held at Sydney's Silverwater jail on July 7, 2018. He was on remand after being charged with robbery and possession of a prohibited drug three months earlier.

Also reported by: [Daily Advertiser \(Wagga Wagga\)](#), [Burnie Advocate \(Burnie\)](#), [Ballarat Courier \(Ballarat\)](#), [Bendigo Advertiser \(Bendigo\)](#), [Launceston Examiner \(Launceston\)](#), [National Indigenous Times \(Online\)](#), [Daily Advertiser \(Wagga Wagga\)](#), [Burnie Advocate \(Burnie\)](#), [Ballarat Courier \(Ballarat\)](#), [Bendigo Advertiser \(Bendigo\)](#), [Launceston Examiner \(Launceston\)](#), [National Indigenous Times \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#).

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## Renewed calls for reform aired after death of Veronica Nelson

Shepparton News, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 5

The Victorian Government has been accused of dragging its feet on reforms to prison healthcare standards, which have left people to suffer. That's according to the managing lawyer of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, as the organisation steps up calls for a review into deaths in custody and better healthcare in prisons.

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## Clinical yarning breaks down communication barriers

The Senior - WA, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 9

A new healthcare education program developed in rural Western Australia is helping break down communication barriers between clinicians and First Nations patients. Clinical Yarning is a patient-centred communication framework to increase health professionals' knowledge, confidence and competence in delivering care to Indigenous communities.

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## Housing for Aboriginal elders at risk of homelessness in Bedford Park

ABC Online, Other, 01/02/2024

Purrkanaitya, a housing project for Aboriginal elders at risk of homelessness, will be built by the Sturt River in Bedford Park near the Living Kaurna Cultural Centre. "Our population in Australia is 3% Aboriginal", said SA Minister for Human Services, Nat Cook.

[Read More](#)

## Flinders project examines potential role of social media in young Indigenous men's mental wellbeing

Flinders University is spearheading a project to investigate the potential of social media in enhancing the mental wellbeing of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men. The initiative aims to create a culturally secure platform for discussing sensitive subjects, providing a means to alleviate feelings of isolation and loneliness.

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## OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

### First cell-based flu vaccine available on the National Immunisation Program

Retail Pharmacy, Other, 01/02/2024

CSL Seqirus has confirmed that its cell-based influenza vaccine, Flucelvax QUAD [quadrivalent influenza vaccine (surface antigen, inactivated, prepared in cell cultures)], will be available on the National Immunisation Program (NIP) for the 2024 Australian influenza season. Flucelvax QUAD is the first and only cell-based influenza vaccine available in Australia and will be reimbursed for people at higher risk of complications from flu, including:

[Read More](#)

### NSW, Victoria, ACT on high alert for measles -are you at risk?

SBS, Other, 01/02/2024, Ruth McHugh-Dillon

Measles cases are soaring in Europe, Asia and Africa, prompting concerns about potential outbreaks in Australia. Available in other languages We've become used to looking out for symptoms like a runny nose, cough and fever as signs of a Covid-19 infection.

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## THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

### Travel tips for medication

The Senior - VIC, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 26

It's holiday time, and we are all looking forward to a break. However, for those who take medication regularly - especially if it's the life-saving kind - travelling can be stressful, and even dangerous. [...] You can find more information on the Therapeutic Goods Administration website.

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

### Warning issued over ED supplements

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 01/02/2024, Mia Erickson

If a little under-the-cover fun is on the cards, most people have a few tricks they like to pull out to set the mood. Some will gorge themselves on well-known aphrodisiacs such as oysters and chocolate, gulp down a glass or two of liquid courage, or at the very least make use of their bedroom dimmer switch. [...] And while most might argue these pills and concoctions are mostly harmless, safety alerts issued by the Therapeutic Goods Association (TGA) this week beg to differ.

[Read More](#)

### Cosmetic injectables industry slams crackdown on advertising rules by Therapeutic Goods Administration

ABC Online, Other, 01/02/2024

Practitioners say an unexpected crackdown on advertising rules around cosmetic injectables effectively gags their businesses and limits the information prospective patients can receive about their care. In



January, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) sent out a clarification letter to the cosmetic beauty industry outlining changes to the way services are advertised.

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## OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

### US cops bust meth, coke ring

Daily Telegraph, General News, 02/02/2024, Tom Minear, Page 22

US authorities have smashed a Californian drug ring that allegedly shipped hundreds of kilograms of methamphetamine and cocaine to Australia in everything from instant noodle packets to car parts. The alleged traffickers used encrypted communications and a transnational network of dodgy customs brokers, shipping workers and border officials until their scheme was brought down last month.

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### Blow in the bag driver?

Courier Mail, General News, 02/02/2024, Samantha Scott, Page 23

Police have been nabbing coked-up motorists almost twice a day following changes to roadside drug testing in Queensland last year. Queensland Police Service data has revealed 322 drug driving offences involving cocaine had been recorded between July 7 and December 31 a figure road safety advocates say was "just the tip of the iceberg".

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### Hundreds of cocaine-related driving offences identified by Queensland's new roadside testing regime

ABC Online, Other, 01/02/2024, Jack McKay

Hundreds of Queensland motorists have been caught with cocaine in their system after the government added the narcotic to the state's drug driving regime. According to new figures from Queensland Police, the state recorded 322 drug driving offences involving cocaine between July 7 and December 31, 2023.

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### Quick festival action pushes pill testing into the spotlight again

ABC Online, Other, 01/02/2024

After festival organisers and volunteers stopped an event in Sydney over the weekend to warn the crowd about a suspicious drug circulating, pill testing is once again being debated. Currently, only the ACT and Queensland have pill testing sites with Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan seeking expert advice.

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### Radio National, Breakfast, 01/02/2024, Patricia Karvelas

Interview with Mary Harrod, CEO, NSW Users and AIDS Association and Tim Powell, DanceWize. The spotlight is once again on pill testing after organisers at a festival in Sydney had to warn the 21,000-strong crowd about a suspicious drug. Festival medics discovered one man had taken a synthetic opioid more dangerous than fentanyl and heroin. Harrod says if pill testing was available at the festival, it could have prevented the initial overdoses, the warning could have gotten out earlier and it could have prevented some harm.

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## FOOD STANDARDS

## Unpacking unhealthy tactics

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 02/02/2024, Page 22

Junk food manufacturers are targeting Australian children with widespread, unregulated use of promotional techniques such as cartoon characters, Deakin University research has revealed. Researchers from Deakin's acclaimed Global Centre for Preventive Health and Nutrition (GLOBE) analysed the packages of around 8000 Australian foods and drinks across a range of categories.

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