



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Saturday, 3rd February 2024

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [**Courier Mail**](#) (page 3) reports that QLD chief health officer Dr John Gerrard will personally visit every state hospital to assess Covid-19 safety protocols amid concerns about ward transmission.
- The [**Herald Sun**](#) (page 5) reports that Ambulance Victoria has fallen short of urgent response targets, with 67 per cent of cases responded to within 15-minute benchmarks. The figure is a slight improvement on previous quarterly results, but below the 85 per cent target.
- The [**Adelaide Advertiser**](#) (page 5) reports new data has revealed that 3960 hours were lost to ramping in South Australia in the month of January, SA Opposition leader David Speirs saying the government was responsible for delivering the 20 worst months of ramping in the state's history.
- The [**Daily Telegraph**](#) (page 21) reports that an experimental brain cancer medicine has been secured by the federal government, meaning Australians will have free access to treat the condition known as DIPG, thanks to Health Minister Mark Butler's intervention.
- The [**Courier Mail**](#) (page 13) reports that the federal government will commit \$1.5 million to assist people with metastatic breast cancer, Health Minister Mark Butler saying it will lead to a

MINISTER BUTLER

Ageing Boomers will push health system to the limit

Weekend Australian, General News, 03/02/2024, Tom Dusevic, Page 21

I covered Medicare's ninth birthday party in 1993 for this newspaper, trekking out to Sydney's Bankstown. There was a green-frosted cake and big-lunged nine-year-olds on hand to help then prime minister Paul Keating blow out blackout-sized candles. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler concedes there's more work to do, particularly getting GPs into rural areas and into the broader system where primary care is now fundamental.

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A battle to win funding for kids

Daily Telegraph, General News, 03/02/2024, Cydonee Mardon, Page 11

While Alan Suy works hard to make every dream of his daughter's come true, he's devastatingly aware her brain tumour is a ticking time bomb. Mr Suy will try anything – even if it offers just a one per cent chance of keeping Maddy alive. [...] Mr Suy said the parent group that has been closely working with federal Health Minister Mark Butler's office in the past year said they were making good progress in their quest for \$21 million funding towards research targeted at DIPG.

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How can we help?

Daily Telegraph, Editorials, 03/02/2024, Page 62

The desperation in Alan Suy's pleas for help is heartbreaking. He knows he is not the only parent who is slowly watching a child die, but his emotions are heightened because he is sharing the pain of other parents he knows who have already recently lost the battle. [...] He understands the complexities of attracting government funding, and he is grateful they are getting a hearing from Health Minister Mark Butler.

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Big win on brain cancer medicine

Daily Telegraph, General News, 03/02/2024, Cydonee Mardon, Page 21

The federal government has secured access to an experimental medicine already helping eight-year-old Eve Daher in her fierce battle against the highly aggressive brain cancer known as DIPG. Eve's parents have spent in excess of \$110,000 on ONC201 and are relieved they and other Australians will now have free access thanks to intervention from federal Health Minister Mark Butler and intense lobbying from the neuro-oncology team at Sydney Children's Hospital.

Also reported by: [Weekend Post \(Cairns\)](#).

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NBN Newcastle Hunter, NBN News, 02/02/2024, Natasha Beyersdorf and Gavin Morris

A family that spent more than \$100,000 to keep its daughter alive will now be able to use the medicine for free. The Australian government has stepped in to help secure access to the experimental drug, one of only a few lifelines available to families. [...] Now, a breakthrough after the federal health minister wrote to the company, pleading with them to include Australian families in that access program.

[Play Now](#)

\$1.5m as tribute to late MP

Courier Mail, General News, 03/02/2024, Page 13

Anthony Albanese has pledged \$1.5m to improve outcomes for people with metastatic breast cancer,

in a tribute to the late Peta Murphy. Ms Murphy, who died in December, had been a strong advocate for breast cancer research and care, especially during her four-year parliamentary career. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said being able to collect data would mean a "better understanding" of the cancer.

Similar coverage reported by: [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Perth Now \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Hospital mould fiasco stinks

Courier Mail, General News, 03/02/2024, Kylie Lang, Page 53

[...] LOATHE: Federal Health Minister Mark Butler showing he is out-of-touch with reality by suggesting people "ring around" to find a bulk-billing GP in their area.

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Medicare urgent care clinic opens in Carlton

InnerCity News, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 7

Inner-city locals now have greater access to the healthcare they need with the opening of the Inner Melbourne Medicare Urgent Care Clinic (Medicare UCC). [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the Carlton clinic would mean people in the community who needed urgent but not acute care could get it quickly even if it was outside standard hours, and all they'd need was their Medicare card. [...] The clinic was officially unveiled on December 19 by Assistant Minister for Health Ged Kearney and Senator Jess Walsh.

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McCormack says health minister leaving regional Australians behind

Forbes and Parkes Phoenix, General News, 02/02/2024, Page 4

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. It comes after the Minister moved the goalposts regarding Distribution Priority Areas for GPs bringing Newcastle, Wollongong and some suburbs of Sydney into the scheme therefore stripping doctors from the regions forcing of community pharmacies to pick up the tab for its 60-day medicine dispensing policy putting services in regional communities under threat.

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2MCE, 17:00 National Radio News, 02/02/2024

Medicare turned 40 yesterday, and although many Australians have felt the benefits of universal health care since its inception in 1984, there are concerns the scheme hasn't evolved in line with the nation's changing health needs. Health Minister Mark Butler praised bulk billing and Medicare, saying it's boosted social equity no matter where Australians live. But with rebate increases and a lack of GPS in regional and remote areas, for many Australians, adequate health care is becoming less accessible. Political correspondent Noah Sarkum asked federal MP for Riverina Michael McCormack his thoughts on Minister Butler's statement.

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Bulk billing bump hailed as calls for aid increase

Kalgoorlie Miner, General News, 02/02/2024, 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 a medical appointment due to price has doubled. [...] The changes were making a difference for providers and patients alike, Health Minister Mark Butler said.

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Bulk billing rates are up and so are Labor's spirits

RiotACT, Other, 02/02/2024, Chris Johnson

The Federal Government is giving itself a big pat on the back for GP bulk billing rates rising in Canberra. Across the ACT, bulk billing has risen by 1.9 percentage points in the first two months since the government tripled the bulk billing incentive. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler noted that doctors' association groups had been calling the initiative a 'game changer'.

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Butler's 'vote with your feet' moment is a big problem

The Medical Republic, Other, 02/02/2024, Jeremy Knibbs

Telling the public to shop for a bulk-billing practice is a huge blunder that reminds us of a long history of abuse of general practice by government. You might think of Medicare and bulk billing as like a marriage between government and GPs – a contract of sorts – with the government as the dominant and financially powerful partner in the marriage and the patients as the children. [...] There's some good people inside the Department of Health and Ageing as well that had started leaning into this new energy and optimism, despite being handed a huge mess from the previous government and despite there being pockets of resentment still in the department from the past.

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ABC Radio Perth, Statewide Mornings, 02/02/2024, Nadia Mitsopoulos

Interview with Minister for Health Mark Butler. Seven Urgent Care Clinics have now opened in WA but emergency department doctors say their effects are minimal. Butler says they are still scaling up and around 1,500 WA people attend the clinics. He says Logan Hospital found that their category four and category five presentations have lessened by 20% to 25% after opening an Urgent Care Clinic in Ipswich. He says there were 360,000 additional free visits to the doctor across two months.

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Dithering on wonder drug

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 03/02/2024, Andrew Koubaridis, Page 27

Thousands of Australian cancer patients are at risk of dying as they wait for health officials to decide on the wider availability of wonder drug Keytruda. The Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) has deferred its decision on whether Keytruda will be available to more Australians through an agreement that would have been the first of its kind in the world. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler was contacted for comment.

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\$13.8m boost to brain research

The Senior - VIC, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 57

Researchers at The Florey have received a combined \$13.8 million to support research that seeks to find treatments for a range of brain and mental health conditions. Health Minister Mark Butler announced the funding as part of the National Health and Medical Research Council's Investigator Grants and Ideas Grants.

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Fears surging number of Australian vapers will turn to 'dangerous' black market

9News, Other, 02/02/2024, Yashee Sharma

The number of Australians who took up vaping surged by 30 per cent last year, raising concerns users will turn to dangerous black market stock in the wake of new laws. The federal government legislated a ban on the import of disposable vapes on January 1 with tighter regulations threatened to follow. [...] "Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Health Minister Mark Butler are simultaneously creating another burden during the cost-of-living crisis by forcing adults who vape to see a doctor and pay \$150 – around five times the amount for a black market vape - to access a legal one from the chemist," he said.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

New clinic off to a busy start

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 03/02/2024, Chris Burns, Page 7

A new urgent-care health clinic in Thuringowa Central has seen more than 1600 patients since it opened a month ago, with the most common complaints being urinary tract infections, tonsillitis, skin infections and lacerations. A federal government minister said new clinics such as that in Thuringowa Central were alleviating pressure at local hospitals such as the Townsville University Hospital. Rural and Remote Health Assistant Minister Emma McBride, who visited the clinic this week, said it was making a "real difference" for Townsville's health outcomes.

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Sky News Regional, Breakfast, 02/02/2024, Jaynie Seal

The federal government has reiterated the importance of Medicare Urgent Care Clinics. Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health Emma McBride visited the Townsville facility in northern Queensland recently, which has in fact seen 1600 patients in the past six weeks, and she claims it's helping reduce pressure on local hospitals. The assistant minister has also defended Labor's investments into Medicare, saying it does benefit all Australians. [video: Assistant Minister McBride]

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Scarlet's winning story

Bundaberg Today, General News, 02/02/2024, Angela Norval, Page 35

It was a proud moment for Kepnock State High School acting head of department – the arts, Amanda O'Donnell to hear that student Scarlet Hickmott was a winner in the ABC Heywire Competition. Hundreds of Australians aged 16 to 22 from regional, rural and remote areas entered the competition by speaking openly and authentically about life beyond major cities, through written stories, photos, videos or audio recordings. [...] Rural and Regional Health Assistant Minister Emma McBride said this year's winners were worthy additions to the Heywire legacy.

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\$4.5m invested into mental health

southburnett.com.au, Other, 02/02/2024

Kingaroy's new mental health support service, Head To Health, has been "officially" opened, even though it is already supporting about 30 clients. The facility, located in the old garden centre building in Kingaroy Street, had a soft opening in mid-December while final work on the fitout was still under way. Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Emma McBride travelled to Kingaroy on Wednesday to do the official honours.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

Medicare urgent care clinic opens in Carlton

InnerCity News, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 7

Inner-city locals now have greater access to the healthcare they need with the opening of the Inner Melbourne Medicare Urgent Care Clinic (Medicare UCC). [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the Carlton clinic would mean people in the community who needed urgent but not acute care could get

it quickly even if it was outside standard hours, and all they'd need was their Medicare card. [...] The clinic was officially unveiled on December 19 by Assistant Minister for Health Ged Kearney and Senator Jess Walsh.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCCARTHY

No relevant coverage

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DEPARTMENT

Sportz Central upgrade on the home straight

Coffs Coast News of the Area, General News, 02/02/2024, Page 33

City of Coffs Harbour's reimagined turbocharged Sportz Central is nearing the end game - with an official opening of the facility imminent. [...] The \$8.2 million project is supported by grant funding from the Federal Government (Department of Health and Aged Care) Female Facilities & Water Safety Stream Program and the NSW State Government Multi-Sport Community Facility Fund.

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'I'd worry if it was cancer': Pensioner furious at \$365 fee for MRI scan

Newcastle Herald, Other, 02/02/2024, Damon Cronshaw

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 thigh muscle. [...] A federal health department statement said "GPs are only able to request a small number of Medicare-eligible MRI services" mainly for the head, spine and knee for patients up to age 50.

Also reported by: [Hunter Valley News \(Online\)](#), [Gloucester Advocate \(Online\)](#), [Macleay Argus \(Online\)](#), [Maitland Mercury \(Online\)](#).

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Pharmacies claim over \$227k through NIPVIP in January

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

Close to half of Australia's Section 90 approved community pharmacies are registered to participate in the new National Immunisation Program Vaccination in Pharmacy (NIPVIP) program a Department of Health and Aged Care official reports.

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Butler's 'vote with your feet' moment is a big problem

The Medical Republic, Other, 02/02/2024, Jeremy Knibbs

Telling the public to shop for a bulk-billing practice is a huge blunder that reminds us of a long history of abuse of general practice by government. You might think of Medicare and bulk billing as like a marriage between government and GPs – a contract of sorts – with the government as the dominant and financially powerful partner in the marriage and the patients as the children. [...] There's some good people inside the Department of Health and Ageing as well that had started leaning into this new energy and optimism, despite being handed a huge mess from the previous government and despite there being pockets of resentment still in the department from the past.

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CORONAVIRUS

Top doc on tour to take on Covid

Courier Mail, General News, 03/02/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 3

The chief health officer will personally visit each state hospital to assess Covid-19 safety protocols following pressure from concerned doctors who claim patients are dying "unnecessarily" due to ward transmission. In an email to the Australian Medical Association Queensland on Thursday, Dr John Gerrard emphasised that he had been concerned about the problem for "some time" and would be meeting with staff to discuss concerns and challenges.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Uncertainty in case against man accused of nursing home rape

Newcastle Herald, General News, 03/02/2024, Mark Russell, Page 32

A decision has yet to be made on whether a man accused of raping a 90-year-old woman in a nursing home will face upgraded charges over her death 13 days later. A lawyer for the Office of the NSW Director of Public Prosecutions indicated in Gosford Local Court yesterday that it was still uncertain if the case would end up in the Supreme Court following the woman's death.

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

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New modern aged care

Northern Daily Leader, General News, 03/02/2024, Tess Kelly, Page 1

Aged care operators have used the country music festival to dispel any concerns about a new home being built next door to a busy pub. Tamworth Community Aged Care, located on The Ringers Road, will start providing 24-hour care to 144 residents when the home opens in March.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Database for cancer

Herald Sun, General News, 03/02/2024, James Campbell, Page 4

The federal government will provide \$1.5 million to create a national database that tracks long-term cancer outcomes. The push to create a comprehensive system of cancer data collection was a passion project of Labor MP Peta Murphy, who died of breast cancer last December. On Saturday, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese is set to announce the government will give \$1.5 million to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to collect data from states and territories on the outcomes for people with cancer, including how long it took to be diagnosed.

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The choc shock in your six pack of spirits

Herald Sun, General News, 03/02/2024, Sue Dunlevy, Page 31

A can of premixed spirits contains as many calories as a chocolate bar and switching your drinking habit could help you shed kilos, a shocking analysis shows. Two glasses of prosecco or a pint of full strength beer are equivalent to eating a slice of pizza. And, if you down two bottles of cider you'll be drinking as many calories as there are in a cheeseburger.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [Weekend Post \(Cairns\)](#).

Floor limit would reduce booze harm

The West Australian (Saturday edition), Letters, 03/02/2024, Sandy Lukjanowski, Page 121

With continuing news reports, hospital admissions and calls to crisis lines regarding alcohol-related harm, there is no questioning the need for immediate action to eliminate the ongoing threat that alcohol has on the WA community's health and wellbeing. Alcohol consumption is the leading risk factor for injury in WA.

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The toxic side of soft drinks

The West Australian (Saturday edition), General News, 03/02/2024, Caroline De Mori, Page 124

For the past 20 years I have visited and worked in more than 40 remote communities across WA and NT, consulting with locals and implementing a long-term health and disease prevention program. For decades, research has recorded that the children and their families living in remote Australian communities suffer preventable diseases at rates worse than many of the poorest countries in the world.

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New curriculum guidelines to change how health is taught at schools

9News, Other, 02/02/2024

New changes to the Australian curriculum will affect the way food and wellbeing is talked about at schools across the country. Under the guidelines released today, activities that include calculating calories, body mass index, body measurements or recording food intake will be avoided to reduce unintended harm.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Hope for women of an end to UTI pain

Weekend Australian, General News, 03/02/2024, Natasha Robinson, Page 1

Australia is on the verge of scientific breakthroughs in the treatment of chronic urinary tract infections that leave hundreds of thousands of women suffering major disability, often for decades. The groundbreaking developments in diagnostics for chronic urinary tract infections, which are estimated to cost the nation \$1bn a year, come as top doctors call for an overhaul of guidelines on antibiotic treatment and testing.

Also reported by: [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [The West Australian \(Saturday edition\) \(Perth\)](#).

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"They are literally saying you are mad. They look at you as if you are making it all up"

Weekend Australian, Magazine, 03/02/2024, Natasha Robinson, Page 12

It's a painful, debilitating condition that blights the lives of women and girls. Why are doctors only now waking up to the reality of chronic urinary tract infections?

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

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

PM's \$1.5m cancer tribute to Murphy

Weekend Australian, General News, 03/02/2024, Page 7

Anthony Albanese has pledged \$1.5m to improve outcomes for people with metastatic breast cancer, in a tribute to the late Labor MP Peta Murphy. Murphy, who died in December, had been a strong advocate for breast cancer research and care, especially during her four-year parliamentary career.

Furry friend a calming touch

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 03/02/2024, Brad Crouch, Page 23

David Bernard's smile says it all - a furry four-legged friend when undergoing cancer treatment is a ray of sunshine on an otherwise dull day. Mr Bernard, 70, of Norwood, is a patient at the Icon Cancer Centre Tennyson which has introduced pet therapy and, with World Cancer Day tomorrow, he praised it as a great initiative.

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Bowel screening reminder for World Cancer Day

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 02/02/2024, Natalie Dragon

Ahead of World Cancer Day on 4 February, Australian researchers are calling for people of all ages to be aware of the signs and symptoms of bowel cancer. "We know early detection and treatment is vital to overcoming not only bowel cancer, but potentially other cancers as well," said Professor Si Ming Man from the Australian National University (ANU).

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PRIMARY CARE

When it's time to go

Weekend Australian, Review, 03/02/2024, Rodney Syme, Page 16

Dementia is the worst disease known to man. It is the worst journey in the world. It is a progressive terminal illness that has no cure. It lasts from five to 15 years, gradually stripping away all those assets that make us human, and it is often accompanied by unrecognised significant physical suffering.

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South Australian daughter's touching message after mum's euthanasia death

7news.com.au, Other, 02/02/2024, Ailish Delaney

Jasmin Wong feels "so lucky" for the last memories she shared with her mum, Lynne. The 73-year-old battled breast cancer for more than a decade before she decided to end her life via voluntary assisted dying (VAD) seven months ago.

[Read More](#)

Excluding children from VAD 'abhorrent', Exit says

Canberra Times, Other, 02/02/2024, Lucy Bladen

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.

[Read More](#)

2CC, Canberra Live, 02/02/2024, Leon Delaney

Interview with QUT Professor Lindy Willmott. ACT's inquiry into its VAD bill has heard from Calvary Palliative Care and NZ Society of Palliative Medicine that investment into palliative care is needed. Willmott says the models of voluntary assisted dying legislation throughout Australia have very narrow eligibility requirements. She notes no institution should be required to participate in voluntary assisted dying if that conflicts with their values or beliefs.

[Play Now](#)

2CC, Breakfast, 02/02/2024, Stephen Cenatiempo

Interview with Palliative Care Australia CEO Camilla Rowland. Cenatiempo says Rowland said the 2024 Federal Budget is a key moment in deepening current reforms across health, aged care, cancer and disability sectors. Rowland says the home and community care programme was scrapped when they introduced the NDIS and My Aged Care states and territories would pick up the bulk of the in-home care that was needed for groups other than people who were elderly but the majority of people who aren't necessarily eligible for those missed out on support.

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Liberal MP digs in: fake patients 'OK'

The Saturday Age, General News, 03/02/2024, Kieran Rooney and Aisha Dow, Page 14

State Liberal Party frontbencher Richard Riordan has doubled down on his defence of Colac Area Health over allegations its staff posed as patients for a government media event, widening a split with Opposition Leader John Pesutto, who branded the situation a scandal that warranted an independent inquiry. Riordan told ABC radio yesterday that the use of fake patients for an event Health Minister MaryAnne Thomas attended in August was "OK" if they helped demonstrate pressure on the system.

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

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Hospital's 'fake patients' probe

Ballarat Courier, General News, 03/02/2024, Page 8

A regional Victorian hospital is under investigation after allegations staff and their family members posed as patients during a visit by the state's health minister. It is alleged 10 staff or relatives presented to Colac Area Health's urgent care department within half an hour on August 9, when Health Minister Mary-Anne Thomas toured the hospital in the state's south-west.

Also reported by: [Burnie Advocate \(Burnie\)](#), [Launceston Examiner \(Launceston\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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

Puffer fish, toads, drugs all in day's work

The Saturday Age, General News, 03/02/2024, Erin Pearson, Page 15

Above Victoria's mortuary a huge catalogue of more than 1400 drugs and poison samples is helping solve some of the state's most mysterious deaths. From poppyseed tea to puffer fish, toads, magic mushrooms, medicines and illicit drugs, the sterilised laboratory inside the state's forensic medicine centre can unearth murder plots, identify dangerous drivers, and help families piece together just what happened during their loved one's final hours.

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15 minutes ... and waiting

Herald Sun, General News, 03/02/2024, Mitch Clarke, Page 5

Ambulance Victoria has again failed to meet its own targets with just 67 per cent of urgent cases responded to within the 15-minute benchmark. Figures released by the state government on Friday as part of quarterly health data for the October to December period represent a slight improvement on the previous quarter.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#). Similar coverage: [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Mobile paramedics model reviewed

Bendigo Advertiser, General News, 03/02/2024, Callum Godde, Page 12

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.

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Ramping issue far from 'fixed'

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 03/02/2024, Brad Crouch, Page 5

January was the third worst month for ramping, nearly two years after the election of Labor on a core promise to "fix" the problem. New data shows 3960 hours were lost to ramping last month.

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

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

Interview with Qld Premier Steven Miles regarding ambulance ramping.

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A black day for hospital plagued by filthy mould

Courier Mail, General News, 03/02/2024, Kylie Lang, Page 8

Dangerous thick black mould has been spreading in a major public hospital where elderly patients battle infections including pneumonia. Ceilings in the 9BN ward in the Royal Brisbane and Women Hospital's Ned Hanlon Building have been described as "filthy and disgusting" by a patient visitor who sent damning photographs to The Courier-Mail.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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Hospital mould fiasco stinks

The Courier Mail, Other, 02/02/2024, Kylie Lang

When new laws rightly place landlords in breach if they don't eradicate existing mould in rental properties within seven days, how is it that potentially deadly mould can be allowed to grow on the ceilings of our biggest hospital for weeks, asks Kylie Lang.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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Canberrans pay most in the nation for medical services

Canberra Times, General News, 03/02/2024, Lanie Tindale, Page 14

ACT residents pay more out-of-pocket to see a doctor than anyone else in the country, productivity commission data shows. Canberrans pay more on average to see a general practitioner, medical specialist and allied health professional.

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

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They failed him

The West Australian (Saturday edition), General News, 03/02/2024, Page 12

The heartbroken mother of a man who died when his car crashed into a tree has criticised WA's health system for "failing" to help her son when he went to hospital with heart attack symptoms days before his death. Penelope Normington said she may never know if her 20-year-old son Dashell was having a cardiac arrest after he walked out of Jurien Bay Health Centre on June 5 last year without being assessed.

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It's the birth of a bloom industry

The West Australian (Saturday edition), Business News, 03/02/2024, Cheyanne Enciso, Page 129

More M&A deals could soon fire up in the booming fertility industry as rising average maternal age and shifting social attitudes combine to drive demand for assisted reproductive services. Companies such as Virtus, Monash IVF and Genea are now dominating the industry following a series of acquisitions in the past decade.

Also reported by: [The West Australian \(Saturday edition\) \(Perth\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

Plug is pulled on speech

Border Mail, General News, 03/02/2024, Anthony Bunn, Page 1

An Albury Wodonga Health chief has pulled out of giving an address which promised to tell of "navigating community angst" brought about by moving two hospital sites onto a "single greenfield site". Director of capital redevelopment Susan Medlin had been slated to speak at the Health Facilities Design and Development Summit to be held in Sydney on March 20-21.

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Our own big build

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 03/02/2024, Bernard Humphreys, Page 1

One of Sunraysia's largest accommodation complexes will be built by the charitable foundation that supports Mildura Base Public Hospital. The MBPH Foundation is planning a building of up to 150 rooms for patients and their families, and for use as short-term accommodation for new hospital staff who have travelled to the area to work.

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SHPA's key ideas for Budget submission

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 02/02/2024

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia's (SHPA) key 2024/25 Federal Budget recommendations were submitted across three areas - medicines access, scope of practice, workforce development and sustainability. The body wants embedding of non-dispensing pharmacists into primary care teams in general practices and residential aged care facilities.

[Read More](#)

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

The NSW Ambulance Service has apologised for the leak of a graphic image of the wounds of shark attack victim Lauren O'Neill. The image was shared on social media and prompted a probe by St Vincent's Hospital, where Lauren has been recovering.

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

Interview with emergency physician Dr Stephen Parnis regarding leaked photos of shark attack victim Lauren O'Neill.

[Play Now](#)

2CC, Breakfast, 02/02/2024, Stephen Cenatiempo

Interview with Royal Australian College of General Practitioners president Nicole Higgins. There has been a 2.1% increase in bulk billing for vulnerable patients nationally. Higgins says they will get results if they put money into general practice and support patients and their rebate. She says people are getting older and having more chronic diseases and Medicare was designed to subsidise free hospital care and subsidise general practice.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Mental health chief retires midway through investigation

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 03/02/2024, Angus Thomson and Caitlin Fitzsimmons, Page 7

The head of the state government body responsible for improving mental health in NSW has left the

agency amid a SafeWork investigation and a horror workplace survey that reveals it is one of the unhappiest workplaces in the public service. NSW Mental Health Commissioner Catherine Lourey yesterday told staff of her decision to retire from the \$339,890 role less than two years into her second five-year term.

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

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App to help loved ones prevent suicide

Daily Telegraph, General News, 03/02/2024, Page 20

The founder of the Australian Suicide Prevention Foundation has released the Prevent A Suicide: What To Say app. "Establishing a connection using our messages on the app with a family member, friend, or workmate to let them know you are there to help them can save their life," Associate Professor David Horgan said.

Also reported by: [The West Australian \(Saturday edition\) \(Perth\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#).

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

No relevant coverage

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

'Shot in the arm': junior doctors are on the way

Newcastle Herald, General News, 03/02/2024, Damon Cronshaw, Page 2

The Hunter-New England public health system will get a boost this month, with 109 junior doctors to begin on-the-job training. The interns will start work in public hospitals across the district.

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

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

Migrant workers a relief for aged care facility

Border Mail, General News, 03/02/2024, Layton Holley, Page 10

A squadron of migrant workers has stepped in to rescue an Albury aged care centre from "severe" staff shortages. Lutheran Aged Care joined forces with Groworx, a recruitment and training company, to bring 26 Filipino workers and nurses to Albury.

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Calls for more specialist training in regional Victoria to encourage doctors to work outside the cities

ABC Online, Other, 02/02/2024, Natasha Schapova

When Lisa Gilbert was deciding what to specialise in, she had to choose between her dream job of becoming a physician or staying in the region that had become her home. Originally from Melbourne, Dr Gilbert completed her four-year medical degree at the Monash University Churchill campus, but when it came to choosing a specialty her options were limited.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

Cancer patients on hold for drug

Daily Telegraph, General News, 03/02/2024, Andrew Koubaridis, Page 20

Thousands of cancer patients are at risk of dying as they wait for health officials to decide on the wider availability of wonder drug Keytruda. The Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee has deferred a decision on whether Keytruda will be available to more Australians through an agreement that would have been the first of its kind in the world.

Also reported by: [Weekend Post \(Cairns\)](#).

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

Economics can fill the gap in the design of Australia's dental care

The Mandarin, Other, 02/02/2024, Henry Cutler

Late last year, the senate issued a report looking at the best ways to provide dental services to Australians. It recommended universal access to dental care via Medicare or a similar scheme, being done in stages.

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

AHPRA changes social media guidelines after doctors reported for Gaza posts

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

Doctors who call for peace talks in Gaza are unlikely to trigger an AHPRA investigation, the watchdog says in updated social media guidelines. The guideline changes come two weeks after it revealed 59 health practitioners were subject to complaints between October and 17 January due to their social media posts about the Israel-Gaza war.

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

No relevant coverage

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SPORT

Concussions under the spotlight in guidelines

Northern Daily Leader, General News, 03/02/2024, Ian Chadband and Esther Linder, Page 51

Children and young sportsmen and women are the focus of new guidelines on managing concussion at grassroots level. David Hughes, the Australian Institute of Sport's (AIS) chief medical officer, said the importance of education could not be overstated in introducing the recommendations for youth and community sport.

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Kids playing sport face THREE WEEKS on the sideline through concussion protocols because of a lack of access to proper medical

care

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 02/02/2024, Andrew Prentice

Aussie kids involved in community sports such as rugby league, rugby union and soccer this year will be sidelined for a minimum of three weeks if they display concussion symptoms. It is part of new guidelines released by the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), as concerns remain about the impact of head injuries.

[Read More](#)

ABC News, Afternoon Briefing, 02/02/2024, Matthew Doran

Interview with Nationals MP Dr Anne Webster regarding AIS's new concussion protocols.

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Surfers Paradise QAFLW star Maddy Doherty dream of playing at the highest level cut short by concussion

Gold Coast Bulletin, Other, 02/02/2024, Jake Garland

A Gold Coast Aussie rules player has opened up about the heartbreak she has felt from being told she is one head knock away from brain damage and can no longer play contact sport. Madelyn Doherty is still feeling the lingering effects of her sixth concussion, suffered seven months ago while playing for the Surfers Paradise QFAW Division 1 team as she chased her dream of playing in the AFLW.

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

[Read More](#)

AFL in discussions to move AFLW Dreamtime game to Darwin

National Indigenous Times, Other, 02/02/2024, Jackson Clark

The AFL are reportedly in discussions to permanently move the AFLW Dreamtime clash between Essendon and Richmond to Darwin. According to a report by the ABC, the talks are in 'advanced' stages with Northern Territory Sports Minister Kate Worden stating that the NT government supported the idea in principle.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Lab tumours to fight cancer

Courier Mail, General News, 03/02/2024, Page 26

Australian researchers have grown tumours in the lab to accurately predict what drugs will work for people with bowel cancer - before they begin treatment. The world-first study led by WEHI found drug testing on tumour organoids - 3D cancer models grown from a patient's own tissue - could show how they would respond to a specific cancer treatment.

Also reported by: [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [Weekend Post \(Cairns\)](#).

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World-first research finds new way to target bowel cancer

SBS, Other, 02/02/2024, Tom Stayner

Researchers have developed a way of predicting the effectiveness of treatment for Australia's second biggest cancer killer. They say it can help minimise the guesswork around deciding how best to tackle bowel cancer cases.

[Read More](#)

ABC News, News Breakfast, 02/02/2024, Michael Rowland and Bridget Brennan

Interview with clinical oncologist Professor Peter Gibbs regarding Australian research into growing tumours outside a patient's body.

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

Interview with Walter and Eliza Hall Institute oncologist Prof Peter Gibbs regarding Australian research into growing tumours outside a patient's body.

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Stench warfare to defeat bowel cancer

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 03/02/2024, Brad Crouch, Page 23

It is the good superbug that pulverises gut problems, and now South Australian researchers are using it to sniff out bowel cancer - without a poo test. In a world breakthrough with origins in the misery of World War I German trenches, South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute scientists have launched bacteria on reconnaissance missions to locate hidden tumours.

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Link between brain and behaviour

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 03/02/2024, Page 39

JCU Psychology Senior Lecturer Dr Liza van Eijk's interest in how human biology and human thought processes work together is helping to shed further light on this mysterious link. Working as a neuroscience lecturer and a researcher, Dr van Eijk has been conducting research on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and MR images of newborn children, among others.

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ABC Radio Adelaide, Mornings, 02/02/2024, David Bevan

Interview with Neuroscience Research Australia's Dr Steve Kassem regarding brain mapping research.

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Volunteers sought for depression study

The Senior - SA, General News, 01/02/2024, Page 33

Ketamine has shown potential as a treatment for depression, but often causes unpleasant side effects. A research team believes they may have solved the problem.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Pre-term births at highest in Top End

Weekend Australian, General News, 03/02/2024, Joanna Panagopoulos, Page 3

First Nations women in the Top End of the Northern Territory experience some of the highest rates of premature birth in the world, on par with disadvantaged groups in low-income countries, new research has found. These Indigenous women living in Darwin, East Arnhem and the Katherine, had about twice the risk of pre-term birth (PTB) the leading cause of both neonatal and childhood mortality globally than other women, and the gap continues to widen.

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

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

The Northern Territory has recorded the highest number of baby deaths within 28 days of delivery in

Australia. It's followed by Queensland, where there's been a 47% increase in just four years. Figures from the Productivity Commission show the number of perinatal deaths has jumped from 488 in 2018 to 720 in 2022.

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OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Scope of benchtop ban under review

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 03/02/2024, Angus Thompson, Page 15

The scope of a nationwide ban on engineered stone is being reviewed to guard against manufacturers finding loopholes as they switch to other products also containing potentially harmful crystalline silica.

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

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Pool gastro bug spike

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 03/02/2024, Tamara McDonald, Page 1

Expert health team takes on parasite as Geelong cases climb REPORT: P4 The region's public health unit is working with the Health Department and council to investigate a spike in a gastric illness caused by a parasite in the Greater Geelong area.

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Same vax rates

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 02/02/2024

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) welcomed news that payments for pharmacist administration of COVID-19 vaccinations have increased from yesterday, but urged there should be similar increases across the National Immunisation Program Vaccinations in Pharmacy program (NIPVIP).

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Health sector injects funds

Hobart Mercury, General News, 03/02/2024, Blair Richards, Page 8

Medical companies dominated the list of donors who contributed cash to the Tasmanian Liberal Party last financial year. Analysis by the Mercury of donor financial returns filed with the Australian Electoral Commission reveals the source of some of the income not declared by the Liberals in the party's 2022-23 return.

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High demand puts pressure on Shingrix supply chain

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

Gsk expects to deliver 1.1 million doses of its shingles vaccine to the Commonwealth in the first half of 2024. Higher than anticipated demand for the National Immunisation Program (NIP) listed Shingrix vaccine is impacting the supply of the jab to pharmacies.

[Read More](#)

SSSI for Fluoxetine

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 02/02/2024

The TGA has issued a Serious Scarcity Substitution Instrument (SSSI) for Fluoxetine 20mg tablet. The SSSI states that one fluoxetine 20mg tablet is equivalent to two fluoxetine 10mg capsules.

[Read More](#)

Channel 10, The Project, 02/02/2024, Rove McManus, Georgie Tunny, Michael Hing and Susie Youssef

The cosmetic industry is reeling following a crackdown banning the use of common terms like Botox – and the weirdest thing is, turns out it was already illegal. [...] It's ads like these that have led to a crackdown on broadcasting the supposed benefits of Botox. The TGA realised that this industry had to be cracked down on because these medical procedures are being sold like people are getting a haircut.

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OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

Melbourne's drug crisis worsens as heroin users flood streets around injecting room

NEWS.com.au, Other, 02/02/2024, Rohan Smith

A man in a wheelchair is unconscious and bleeding from wounds all over his legs. He sits alone on the bustling strip known as Melbourne's 'Little Vietnam' for its array of Asian restaurants and supermarkets.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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FOOD STANDARDS

Voyager Estate tempranillo rose recalled over fears there could be glass inside bottles

NEWS.com.au, Other, 02/02/2024

A popular Australian wine made in Margaret River has been recalled over fears it could contain glass inside bottles. Aussies should not consume bottles of Voyager Estate's 750ml 2023 tempranillo rose, Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) have said.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), *Similar coverage:* [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#).

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